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HORÆ MOSAICÆ:

OR

A Dissertation

ON THE

CREDIBILITY AND THEOLOGY

OF THE

PENTATEUCH.

COMPREHENDING

THE SUBSTANCE OF EIGHT LECTURES READ BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY
OF OXFORD, IN THE YEAR 1801; PURSUANT TO THE WILL OF
THE LATE REV. JOHN BAMPTON, A.M.

BY GEORGE STANLEY FABER, B.D.

RECTOR OF LONG-NEWTON.

The Second Edition,

LARGELY REVISED, CORRECTED, ALTERED, AND AUGMENTED.

VOL. I.

—Ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων θεόμωθης, οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνὴρ—

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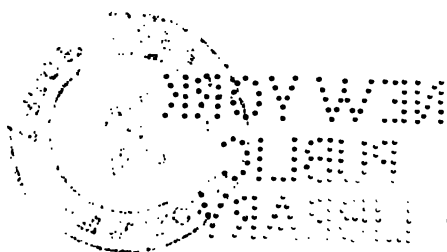
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TO

JACOB BRYANT, Esq.

THE ANALYST OF ANCIENT MYTHOLOGY,

NEW YORK
THIS WORK IS
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

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EXTRACT
FROM THE
LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE LATE
REV. JOHN BAMPTON, A.M.
CANON OF SALISBURY.

—————“ I give and bequeath my Lands and
“ Estates to the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars
“ of the University of Oxford for ever, to have
“ and to hold all and singular the said Lands and
“ Estates upon trust, and to the intents and pur-
“ poses hereinafter mentioned ; that is to say, I
“ will and appoint that the Vice-Chancellor of the
“ University of Oxford for the time being shall take
“ and receive all the rents, issues, and profits
“ thereof, and (after all taxes, reparations, and ne-
“ cessary deductions made) that he pay all the
“ remainder to the endowment of eight Divinity
“ Lecture Sermons, to be established for ever in
“ the said University—

" I direct and appoint, that the eight Divinity
 " Lecture Sermons shall be preached upon either
 " of the following subjects—to confirm and
 " establish the Christian Faith, and to confute all
 " heretics and schismatics—upon the divine autho-
 " rity of the Holy Scriptures—upon the authority
 " of the writings of the primitive Fathers, as to the
 " faith and practice of the primitive Church—upon
 " the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
 " Christ—upon the Divinity of the Holy Ghost
 " —upon the Articles of the Christian Faith, as
 " comprehended in the Apostles' and Nicene
 " Creeds."

PREFACE.

THE Books of Moses constitute a part of divine revelation, against which Infidelity has of late years directed her principal attack. They have been studiously represented as a collection of popular traditions, built upon scarcely a stronger foundation than the legendary tales of classical antiquity. They have been pronounced to resemble the writings of Herodotus, rather than those of Thucydides; and to approximate in a still higher degree to the poems of Homer. Sometimes, their credibility has been even totally denied; and the whole Volume contemptuously assigned to an age of fabulous uncertainty. At other times, the mode of attack has been

changed ; and the hidden sap of treachery has been adopted, in preference to the open threats of defiance. Difficulties have then been industriously started ; the language of profane ridicule has been sedulously adopted ; and plausible objections have been urged in the shape of argument or insinuated under the mask of an affected liberality. Nor are these antichristian efforts confined, in the present generation, to the subtle treatise, or the elaborate disquisition. *Every* vehicle of knowledge is seized upon : and, while the bowels of the earth are ransacked to convince the literary world of the erroneousness of the Mosaical chronology ; history and travels, satire and tragedy, nay even romances and novels, are employed to disseminate the poison among other classes of readers. Such are the labours of modern infidelity ; and thus, through the medium of Judaism, is a blow aimed at the vitals of Christianity.

On the other hand, many persons, who firmly believe in the great truths of the Gospel, and who fully admit the authority of the Pentateuch, seem to fancy, that there is very little connection between them. From this mistaken idea, their *whole* attention is directed to the New Testament; while the venerable code of the Hebrew Scriptures is neglected and almost despised. They appear to imagine, that, as Patriarchism has passed away, and as Judaism has been abrogated; they, as Christians, have very little concern with the history of the one or with the institutes of the other. Thus, by deeming it useless to pay any great degree of attention to a volume of obsolete precepts, they virtually, though perhaps not verbally, deny the connection of the Pentateuch with the Gospel: and thence in effect they pronounce, however unintentionally, that the ancient oracles of God are become a mere dead letter.

To obviate the danger, which results from such erroneous opinions, is the end of the following Dissertation on the credibility and theology of the Pentateuch.

Oxford Jan. 17. 1800.

ADVERTISEMENT**TO THE SECOND EDITION.**

IN this second edition, various errors have been corrected, much extraneous matter has been omitted, considerable additions have been made, and very large portions have been entirely new modelled and written afresh. The whole composition therefore, as it is now presented to the public, may truly be considered in the light of a new work.

Long-Newton Rectory.

May 31. 1817.



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HORÆ MOSAICÆ.

BOOK I.

THE
CREDIBILITY OF THE PENTATEUCH
AS A
PORTION OF AUTHENTIC HISTORY.

There are as manifest proofs of the undoubted truth and certainty of the history recorded by Moses, as any can be given concerning any thing, which we yield the firmest assent unto. STILLING. ORIG. SACRÆ. book ii. chap. 2.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the transparency and accountability of the organization. This section also outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, ensuring that the information is reliable and up-to-date.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the financial aspects of the organization. It provides a detailed breakdown of the budget, including income and expenses, and discusses the strategies used to manage the funds effectively. This section also includes a comparison of the organization's financial performance against its goals and objectives.

3. The third part of the document addresses the operational aspects of the organization. It describes the various programs and services provided, and discusses the challenges faced in the process of implementation. This section also includes a discussion of the resources required to support these activities, such as personnel, equipment, and materials.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the future plans of the organization. It outlines the goals and objectives for the next year, and describes the strategies used to achieve them. This section also includes a discussion of the potential risks and challenges that may be encountered, and the measures taken to mitigate them.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the impact of the organization's activities on the community. It provides a detailed analysis of the social and economic benefits generated, and discusses the ways in which the organization has contributed to the development of the area. This section also includes a discussion of the challenges faced in the process of implementation, and the measures taken to address them.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the future plans of the organization. It outlines the goals and objectives for the next year, and describes the strategies used to achieve them. This section also includes a discussion of the potential risks and challenges that may be encountered, and the measures taken to mitigate them.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the future plans of the organization. It outlines the goals and objectives for the next year, and describes the strategies used to achieve them. This section also includes a discussion of the potential risks and challenges that may be encountered, and the measures taken to mitigate them.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the future plans of the organization. It outlines the goals and objectives for the next year, and describes the strategies used to achieve them. This section also includes a discussion of the potential risks and challenges that may be encountered, and the measures taken to mitigate them.

9. The ninth part of the document discusses the future plans of the organization. It outlines the goals and objectives for the next year, and describes the strategies used to achieve them. This section also includes a discussion of the potential risks and challenges that may be encountered, and the measures taken to mitigate them.

10. The tenth part of the document discusses the future plans of the organization. It outlines the goals and objectives for the next year, and describes the strategies used to achieve them. This section also includes a discussion of the potential risks and challenges that may be encountered, and the measures taken to mitigate them.

SECT. I.

THE EXTERNAL CREDIBILITY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

CHAP. I.

A GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE SUBJECT.

RESARCHES into antiquity have this peculiar recommendation, that, while they enlarge the boundaries of useful knowledge, they also interest the fancy and gratify the curiosity. To many other pursuits the mind may perhaps devote itself from a conviction of their necessity ; but it is obliged at the same time to own its reluctance and aversion. It will readily indeed acknowledge their importance : but it will view them in the light of a task, rather than that of a pleasure ; and will submit to the requisite labour, more from an expectation of future benefit, than from any prospect of immediate gratification. But the fatigue, attendant upon

the study of antiquity, is relieved by an unceasing variety, and diminished by the charms of perpetual novelty. The lure of present pleasure is added to the anticipation of distant advantage ; and, while every faculty experiences the powerful stimulus of unsated curiosity, the pursuit is dignified by a consciousness that its object is not devoid of utility to the interests of literature.

Nor is this desire of contemplating the deeds of other times merely an acquired taste, confined to some particular age or country : it is a disposition of the mind, which equally characterises a period of rudeness and an age of civilization. The romantic fables indeed of a barbarous people are gradually rejected by progressive science, and the wild uncertainty of tradition is succeeded by the laborious accuracy of patient investigation : but the ruling principle of curiosity still remains unaltered, though the faculties of the human mind are directed to an end more worthy of reason. As learning increases, legendary absurdities vanish ; and the religious opinions, the customs, the origin, and the architecture, of our predecessors in various parts of the globe, all serve in their turns to arrest the attention and to exercise the ingenuity of the antiquary. Even those, who have no inclination to submit to the fatigue of accurate scrutiny, will readily avail themselves of the labours of others ; and will peruse with pleasure the minute historical detail, or examine with eagerness the well supported hypothesis. Let it however be remembered, that the life and the abilities of man were never designed by Provi-

dence to be solely employed in prosecuting conjectures, which can serve no other purpose than that of gratifying a vain curiosity. The Christian scholar will endeavour to make every literary pursuit, in which he is engaged, tend, if possible, to promote the glory of his Creator, and the best, the religious, interests of mankind. In the solemn hour of retribution, an hour not very far distant from any of us, every pursuit, and every action, which has not, either mediately or immediately, had a reference to the one thing alone absolutely needful, will then appear lighter than vanity itself.

The study of antiquity, if properly directed, may justly claim no contemptible rank in the service even of Religion.

Every historical fact is entitled to a greater or a less degree of our belief, according as it is more or less supported by concurrent testimony, and more or less stamped with the marks of internal veracity. For we are not accustomed to judge, how far a transaction is probable or improbable, by the circumstance of its being more or less remote from our own times : but we take into consideration the credit due to its historian, the coincidence of his narrative with that of other authors, and the evidence which arises from its internal credibility. Hence we perpetually admit or reject the works of different writers, without being in the least degree influenced by the mere antiquity or the mere lateness of the period in which they flourished : and hence the valuable remains of classical history are received as authentic, while the fabulous legends

of the middle ages are justly consigned to obscurity and contempt.

I. The most ancient records now extant are those of the Jewish nation; and the series of events detailed in them extends even to the creation itself.

Of those early and singular transactions the account is given with an unexampled brevity and an unaffected simplicity. The historian appears to be equally free from the love of praise and the desire of exaggeration. Instead of labouring to extend his subject, he seems studiously to contract it; and, instead of adopting the luxuriant language of allegory, he is remarkable for the majestic plainness of his expressions. The undoubted antiquity of the Pentateuch, and the high veneration in which it has ever been held by the posterity of Israel, cannot fail of exciting the attention of every serious inquirer. Unlike the gaudy fables of Paganism, the narrative, which it comprehends, is short, simple, and unadorned. Supernatural interpositions indeed frequently occur; but they are invariably ascribed to one supreme and exalted Being, the Lord of heaven and earth. No mention is made of the real existence of any inferior deities; nor is there even a hint given respecting the propriety of that canonization of mortals, which prevailed so universally in the mythology of the heathens. On the contrary, the religious worship of the gentile world, though repeatedly mentioned by the author of the Pentateuch, is mentioned only in terms of the severest reprobation and the most indignant

contempt. The accommodating spirit of Paganism readily permitted an universal toleration, and encouraged the frequency of religious communion; but, in the Jewish records, every species of worship, except that of the one true God, is pronounced to be vain and abominable. Like some detached and prominent mountain in the neighbourhood of a vast and uniform plain, the code of the Hebrew legislator forms, in this respect, a striking contrast to the mythological fables of every other nation; and, with a solitary majesty, stands totally apart from the various systems of ancient idolatry. The grand characteristic of heathen devotion, however diversified by caprice or modified by imposture, is uniformly Polytheism. In number, titles, and attributes, the objects of adoration may indeed occasionally differ: but a multiplicity of deities still constitutes the general creed of Paganism; and a dereliction of the pure worship of the Unity is equally chargeable upon the refinements of Europe and Asia, the degraded worship of the western hemisphere, and the base superstition of Africa. The wisdom of Egypt, the learning of Greece, the masculine energy of Rome, and the diversified knowledge of Hindostan, were alike unable to preserve them from the universal contagion. Israel alone was exempt, though far inferior to the literary part of the ancients in mere human philosophy; and the *exclusive* characteristic of the Pentateuch is the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead.

Such is the wonderful volume, to which the Jews

pay implicit obedience, and upon which the whole fabric of Christianity is erected.

Here however an important question naturally arises from so interesting a subject ; and a dispassionate inquirer after truth is led almost involuntarily to ask, whether this ancient narrative can stand the test of that scrutiny, which is usually deemed sufficient to establish a claim to historical authenticity.

II. The degree of credit due to the author of the Pentateuch depends upon the coincidence of his narrative with the records and traditions preserved by other nations, and upon the internal evidence of truth which may be discovered in his writings.

With regard to the second of these particulars, it shall be considered in a subsequent portion of this Work. It only remains therefore at present to examine, whether the transactions, detailed by Moses, rest upon his unsupported testimony alone; or whether they are not corroborated by the concurrent voice of all nations in all quarters of the globe.

Various are the pagan traditions, which minutely coincide with the Mosaical account of the early ages of the world : but let it be observed, that this similarity affords no just ground of concluding that they were *derived* from the Pentateuch. Such a circumstance is, in most cases, rendered utterly impossible by the remoteness of the nations in which those traditions were prevalent, and by their total want of connection with the posterity of Israel.

The Arabs or the Egyptians, indeed, might possibly have borrowed from the Jews; but the Chinese and the Hindoos, the Goths and the Americans, were effectually precluded by local circumstances from having had any knowledge of the favoured people of God. We must therefore conclude, that, whatever their popular belief might be, it descended to them, *not through the medium of Jewish antiquities, but down the stream of an universal and uninterrupted tradition.* The singular phenomenon of a general agreement among a vast variety of nations, widely separated from each other, and effectually prevented by their mutual distance from having had any recent intercourse, can only be accounted for upon the supposition, that they all sprang originally from one common ancestor. To Noah alone we must look as the primordial source, to which all pagan nations were indebted for their knowledge of antediluvian events: and as for those, which took place immediately after the deluge, they can only have been diffused over the face of the whole earth by the posterity of the first descendants of that Patriarch. Hence, although the Mosaical documents are the *grand and genuine* repository of all those ancient facts; yet, profane traditions must, for the most part, have been derived, *not from the records of the Jews, but from certain mutilated accounts of the facts themselves.*

Upon this statement depends the whole of the ensuing argument in favour of the authenticity of the books of Moses. If pagan traditions are bor-

rowed from the Pentateuch, instead of being derived, through the different gentile lines of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, from the circumstances themselves; however they may tend to show the antiquity of the sacred volume, they undoubtedly cease to be *undesigned* coincidences.

III. The narrative contained in the Pentateuch naturally divides itself into four distinct portions: the account of the creation; the history of the time which elapsed between the creation and the deluge; the description of the deluge; and the annals of certain remarkable postdiluvian events.

Upon inquiry, it will be found, that the remembrance of these circumstances has been preserved, in a very remarkable manner, by almost every nation upon the face of the earth. The same facts are related both in the east and in the west, with a singular degree of accuracy; and the variations, which occur in the several narratives, serve only to shew, that the knowledge, which was originally possessed by all the immediate descendants of Noah, has in process of time been gradually corrupted.

1. According to the sacred historian, the heavens and the earth were created in six days, by the agency of an all-wise and an all-powerful Being, who revealed himself to mankind by his incommunicable name of *Jehovah*. On the sixth of these days, man was formed in the spiritual image of God; his soul free even from the slightest taint of evil, and all his inclinations in perfect unison with the will of his heavenly Father. Thus holy and

thus upright, he was placed by the Deity in the garden of Paradise; and entered upon a life of immaculate purity and unmix'd happiness.

2. This blissful state of innocence however was soon forfeited. Man yielded to the temptation of a malignant spirit lurking under the disguise of a serpent, and violated the express commandment of God. The sentence of death was pronounced upon him in consequence of his disobedience; though its bitterness was alleviated by the promise of a mighty Conqueror, who was destined to bruise the head of that reptile which had seduced him from the paths of holiness.*

* There is a peculiarity in the denunciation of the penalty, which deserves some notice.

Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for, IN THE DAY THAT THOU EATEST THEREOF, thou shalt surely die. Gen. ii. 17.

Such was the original denunciation: and it has been asked, how it was fulfilled; for, though Adam did undoubtedly die *at length*, yet, so far from dying *in the day that he eat of the forbidden tree*, he did not die until he had reached the age of nine hundred and thirty years.

The true answer to the question I take to be this.

In holy Scripture, the term *day* is used both literally and mystically. Thus, with the prophets, *a day* is employed to denote *a year*: and thus, by a yet greater involution, *a day of God* is equivalent to *a whole millenary*. Psalm xc. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 8. From this ancient and well known mode of computation originated the idea, so familiar both to Jews and to Christians, that the world is to last in its state of labour six thousand years, and that then it is to enjoy a seventh millenary of holy rest. See Mede's Works, book v. c. 3. For, as it was created in six perhaps natural days, which were sue-

3. The baleful workings of sin appeared with their full horror in the next generation ; and human blood was shed for the first time by the hand of a brother. As mankind multiplied, wickedness likewise increased ; and the advanced age, to which they attained at that period, served only to augment the general corruption. At length the avenues to divine mercy were closed ; and those wretched victims of sin were sealed up in final

ceeded by a seventh sabbatical day ; they argued, that it would remain six days of God, which should be succeeded by a seventh divine day of sabbatism. Now I apprehend, that the day, of which the Lord speaks to Adam, is a day of God or a thousand natural years. The prophetic denunciation therefore is, that *he should die in the millenary that he eat of the forbidden fruit*. This, accordingly, was accomplished ; for Adam died before he had attained the age of a thousand years : that is to say, he died in the course of the same great day of God wherein he had transgressed the divine command. It is further worthy of observation, that, after the fall, the life of man was confined within the limits of one of these great days of the Lord ; for not a single antediluvian patriarch reached the age of a millenary : so that, through sin, he literally became an ephemeral being.

We may observe some traces of such a mode of reckoning among the Hindoos ; which I suppose them to have received, though with a corrupt exaggeration, from patriarchal antiquity. A thousand divine ages, each age comprehending a stupendous number of natural years, is said to constitute only a single day of the creative Brahma. Instit. of Menu. chap. i. § 72.

On the same principle, the day of judgment, or the great day of Jehovah, must be viewed as commencing with the overthrow of Antichrist and as extending through the whole millenium. See Mede's Works. book iv. epist. 15. p. 762, 763.

impenitence. The elements waited to receive their commands from God ; and the whole world trembled upon the verge of unexpected destruction. Suddenly the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. A tremendous flood deluged the surface of the globe ; and every soul perished, except the household of one pious Patriarch. Inclosed within a capacious ark, this favoured family remained secure amidst the wreck of universal nature ; perfectly free from the least danger, because under the immediate protection of Omnipotence.

4. The waters at length abated ; and Noah with his offspring prepared to quit the ark, in which they had been preserved. Their attention was first engaged by the cultivation of the earth and by the planting of vineyards : but the harmony of the new world was soon disturbed by the wickedness of Canaan. His unworthy treatment of his aged parent called down a curse upon his head ; while the piety of Shem and Japhet procured a prophetic blessing for their posterity.¹

5. Unmindful of the late judgments of God, the descendants of Noah soon corrupted themselves under the conduct of Nimrod the son of Cush. With a view of laying the foundation of an universal empire and of preventing themselves from being scattered over the face of the earth, they prepared to build a city and a tower : but their im-

¹ See the history of this transaction fully discussed in my *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*. b. i. c. 1. § 1v. 7.

pious design was frustrated by a miraculous interference of heaven; and they were doomed to the very condition, against which they had attempted to guard.*

6. The natural tendency to evil, so deeply rooted in the human breast, seems to have produced at this period that remarkable system of gentile idolatry, which from Babel was carried to every quarter of the globe.² Under such circumstances, God was pleased, in due time, to take Abraham under his peculiar guidance, and to prove his faith by a variety of trials.

A signal example of divine vengeance is recorded to have taken place in his days. Certain cities of Canaan having filled up the measure of their abominations, a torrent of sulphureous fire descended from heaven, and utterly consumed them; while the tract of country, in which they were situated, was converted into a noisome and stagnant lake.

7. From Abraham was descended, in a direct line, the patriarch Joseph. A number of providential events conspired together to throw him into the high situation of prime minister to the king of Egypt, and a dreadful famine of seven years produced the migration of his whole family into that country. Here, in process of time, they multiplied to such a degree, as to excite the jealousy of the

* See this matter fully discussed in my *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*. b. vi. c. 1.

² See my *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*. b. i. c. 1. § IV, v. and passim.

reigning dynasty.¹ A most iniquitous scene of tyranny ensued: but Moses was raised up by God to be the deliverer of his brethren; and a series of miraculous plagues, inflicted by the hand of the prophet, at length forced the prince who then occupied the throne to consent to the departure of the Israelites. Soon however repenting of his constrained permission, he pursued them as far as the waters of the Red Sea: which, in obedience to the divine command, opened a passage through its waves for Moses and his followers; but, returning immediately to its accustomed channel, overwhelmed Pharaoh and his Egyptians.

IV. These are some of the principal circumstances recorded in the Pentateuch; and they are said to have happened in the earliest ages of the world: but the singularity of the events, and the remote period to which they are ascribed, seem to give us, as reasonable beings, an undoubted right to examine their claim to veracity. A blind acquiescence in received opinions is required as a duty only by superstition and imposture: genuine Christianity disdains the lurking artifices of deceit; and founds her empire no less upon the allegiance of the understanding than upon the subjugation of the passions.

The argument, which I mean to prosecute in the first part of my inquiry, may be briefly stated in the following manner.

¹ Namely that of the Indo-Scythic shepherds during their second occupation of Egypt. See my *Origin of Pagan Idol.* b. vi. c. 5.

If the early history contained in the Pentateuch be authentic, it is only natural to expect, that some traces of it at least will be found in pagan records. Thus, supposing the flood for instance to have ever really occurred, it is incredible that all knowledge of so awful a catastrophè should have been entirely lost among the Gentiles. The impression, which it would make on the minds of men, would be far too deep to be easily obliterated : and I scruple not to say, that, if its occurrence had been asserted by Moses alone, while not a single heathen nation had preserved any recollection of it ; that one circumstance would, in my mind, have cast an indelible blot on the veracity of the Hebrew historian. Respecting the transactions of Joshua or Gideon or Sampson, the world at large might well be ignorant : but, if the earth were ever inundated by an universal deluge, some tradition of it more or less vivid must inevitably have been preserved in every ancient nation. It was a matter of such a nature as utterly to preclude the *possibility* of total oblivion.

Let us then, for the purpose of ascertaining the authenticity of the books of Moses, bring together into one point of view the various traditions of Paganism and compare them with the history contained in the Pentateuch.

CHAP. II.

HEATHEN COSMOGONIES.

IN examining the records of ancient pagan nations, we must prepare ourselves to expect a variety of difficulties and to encounter a multitude of dark and incoherent traditions.

The adulteration of truth with mythological fables, and the mutilated state of many primeval narratives, severally contribute, though in a manner diametrically opposite, to diffuse a great degree of obscurity over the remains of heathen antiquity. In the first of these cases, the fair face of truth is hid like the sun behind a cloud; in the second, she is shorn of her rays, and shines with only half her native lustre. The traditions of the pagan world, when viewed from a distance, present to the imagination a wild and fantastic group of distorted images; which resemble rather the unrestrained effusions of romance, than the sober detail of authentic history. A perpetual love of the marvellous; an unwillingness to relate even the most simple circumstance, without some degree of

exaggeration ; and a national vanity, ever desirous of appropriating to a particular country facts which equally concerned all mankind : form the most striking characteristics of ancient mythology. No truth was captivating, unless arrayed in the gaudy dress of allegory ; nor was any allegory interesting, unless immediately connected with the history of each separate nation. Hence, though we meet with nearly the same traditions diffused over the face of the whole earth ; yet we find the principal actors in them, and the particular district in which the events are said to have taken place, immediately adapted to the imaginary annals of every different people. If we consider these several mythological narratives detached from each other, they will convey to us only the idea of exclusive locality. We may indeed be occasionally struck with some partial resemblance between them and the Mosaical history ; yet the impression will soon be obliterated, when we find, to all appearance, that the facts took place in two totally different countries. But, if we combine them together so as to behold at one glance their singular mutual resemblance, and then compare the whole with the records contained in the Pentateuch ; this momentary illusion will speedily vanish : and we shall be convinced, that, however each nation may have appropriated a circumstance to their own peculiar gods and their own peculiar country, it is impossible for all to concur in relating the same facts, unless those facts had really happened in some remote period, when all mankind formed, as it were,

but one great family. Had a single people only given an account of the creation somewhat resembling that of Moses, or preserved a tradition that one of their ancient kings escaped from the waters of a deluge ; we might then with justice conclude, that the former of these coincidences was merely accidental, and that the latter related entirely to a partial inundation. But, when we find, that nearly all the pagan cosmogonies bear a strong likeness to each other, though different deities may be represented by different nations as completing the work ; and when we meet with some tradition of a deluge in every country, though the person saved from it is said, in those various accounts, to have reigned in various districts widely separated from each other : we are constrained to allow, that this general concurrence of belief could never have originated from mere accident. While the mind is in this situation, Scripture comes forward ; and offers to it a narrative more simple, better connected, and bearing a greater resemblance to authentic history, than any of those mythological accounts which occur in the traditions of Paganism. A conviction immediately flashes upon the understanding, that this must be the true history of those remarkable facts, which the Gentiles have handed down to us only through the medium of fable and allegory. The *universality* of similitude between Heathen and Mosaical antiquities bears down every objection ; and the authenticity of the Pentateuch is placed upon the sure basis of undesigned coincidence.

The history of the Jewish Legislator commences with an account of the creation of the world. This is a subject, that has perpetually engaged the attention of the more inquisitive part of mankind in all countries; but in the east, the cradle of the human race, we find those accounts of it, which accord most accurately with the page of Scripture.

I. The inhabitants of Chaldea, long celebrated for their astronomical observations, and deducing their origin from the most remote antiquity, are now utterly extinct as a separate people; and their learning has in a great measure perished with them. Some remains however of their sentiments respecting the creation of the world are preserved in the page of Syncellus from Berosus and Alexander Polyhistor.

Whatever knowledge they had of this event, they ascribe it to the teaching of an amphibious monster, denominated *Oannes*. Like the emblematical deity so common throughout Asia, his form consisted of the body of a man terminating in the tail of a fish. By day he ascended from the waters of the Erythræan Sea, and conveyed his instructions in a human voice to the assembled multitudes: but at night he retired from the land, and concealed himself within the recesses of the ocean.

There was a time, taught the fish-seer, when all things were darkness, and water, and confusion. In the midst of this chaotic fluid existed various monsters of horrible forms: and over it presided the gigantic demon Omoroca. At length the des-

tinued hour of creation arrived: the monster Omoroca fell subdued beneath the victorious arm of the god Belus: the mishapen animals, which composed her empire, were annihilated: and the world was formed out of her substance. Matters having been thus far prepared, Belus next divided the darkness from the light, separated the earth from the heavens, disposed the world in regular order, and called the starry host into existence. As for the human species, it was formed by other inferior deities out of the dust of the earth mixed with the water of the ocean. Hence man was endowed with intellect, and became a partaker of the divine reason. Oannes however taught, that the physiological part of this account was not to be understood literally, but was to be taken merely in an allegorical sense: for, since Omoroca was no real character but only a personification of the sea, the fable was to be interpreted as allusive to the aqueous origin of the Universe.¹

In this tradition we may observe a primordial watery chaos, a separation of darkness from light and of earth from heaven, an orderly disposition of the habitable world, and a confession that the starry host was created by an intellectual agent. We may likewise observe the production of man from the dust of the earth: and we may perceive a distinct recognition, that his soul was made in the image of God because it partook of the divine reason. Such points of similitude to the Mosaical

¹ Syncell. Chronog. p. 29.

account are abundantly clear, though mingled largely with what is confessedly fabulous or allegorical. Let us reject the mythic humour of the tradition: and the residue will approve itself to have originated from the Noëtic school of ancient Patriarchism.

II. The cosmogonic system of the Egyptians, as exhibited by Diodorus Siculus, rests upon the crazy foundation of absolute atheism. Hence I think it not improbable, that they may have received it from those Cuthic or Phenician shepherds; who once subjugated their country, and who, like their brethren in other parts of the world, seem to have been addicted to the impious speculations of Buddhism. But, if we may place any dependance upon an ancient book ascribed to their earliest Thoth or Hermes-Trismegistus, they had also a more rational account of the creation, which in many respects bears a striking resemblance to the Mosaic history.

*In the beginning there was a boundless darkness in the abyss: but water and an intelligent ethereal Spirit acted, with divine power, in the midst of Chaos. Then a holy light issued forth: and the elements were compacted together with sand of a moist substance. Lastly, the whole frame of semi-native nature was, by all the gods, distributed in proper order.**

Here we have the divine incubating Spirit, the primeval Chaos, the aboriginal darkness, the first-

* Herm. Serm. Sacr. c. 3.

produced light, the creation of the elements, and the orderly distribution of all things, set forth in a manner not very dissimilar to that of the inspired narrative. The order likewise of succession is much the same in both accounts : and their general resemblance is such, that it can scarcely be thought to have originated from mere accident. It is not impossible, that, as the Egyptians seem to have learned their atheistical system from the royal Shepherds ; so they may have received a correction to it from those other Shepherds, who are said by Manetho to have likewise dwelt as strangers in the country, and who from his description of them were plainly the children of Israel.¹ Moses, we are told, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians : and, as he thus frequented the schools of their Brahmens, we may easily conceive, that, in return, he communicated to them some portion of his own divine and better wisdom.

III. I have just intimated my suspicion, that the Egyptians may have received their atheistic cosmogony from the Phenician Shepherds ; who were an eminent branch of the daring house of Cush, who had migrated into Palestine from the shores of the Erythræan sea or the Persian gulph, and who had previously left their early settlements at the sources of the Indus and the Ganges.² These Ethiopic warriors have, in all ages, been votaries of Buddha or Saman : and, though they despised

¹ Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. § 14, 15, 26, 27.

² See my Orig. of Pagan Idol. book vi. c. 4, 5.

the complicated idolatry of the Mizraim and destroyed the objects of their worship, their own religious system was professedly atheistical; for they excluded or overlooked the great first Cause, and acknowledged as their only god a supposed transmigrating being who was confessed to have once dwelt a mere man upon earth. Their cosmogony, as might naturally be expected, was built upon the principles of their religion: and it has been handed down to us by one of their own Magi in a curious fragment, which Philo Byblius translated into Greek, and which Eusebius has preserved in the first book of his *Præparatio Evangelica*. Atheistical however as it professedly is, the truth occasionally shines out from the midst of voluntary darkness: and, in many parts of it, we may perceive the disguised outlines of a purer system; from which, as taught by Noah from Adam, the Cushim were the earliest postdiluvian apostates.

The cosmogony then of the Phenicians, as detailed by Sanchoniatho, makes the principle of the Universe to be a dark air and a turbulent evening Chaos.

This opinion, save that all mention of the Deity is omitted, is not very dissimilar to that set forth in the exordium of Genesis: for we there read, that in the beginning the earth was without form and void, that darkness was spread upon the surface of the abyss, and that a Spirit (which the Phenicians thought fit to esteem a material air or wind) hovered over the face of the mighty waters.

A mixture, we are told, was next produced: and

within it were comprehended the rudiments of all things. Then appeared the sun, the moon, and the radiant host of heaven. Afterwards the fishes of the sea, and the whole brute creation, felt the impulse of animal life. And, lastly, two mortals were formed, the progenitors of all mankind.

I omit many of the senseless impertinences of atheism, with which this system abounds when drawn out at full length: for my object is only to point out those particulars, in which it resembles the Mosaic cosmogony.¹

IV. From the cosmogony of the Phenicians, let us proceed to that of the Persians.

According to their system, God created the world, not indeed in six days, but, what is very similar to it, at six different times. Each of these times comprehended a considerable number of days, though not an equal one; yet, in the sum total, the six times amounted exactly to a whole year. During the period of the first, were created the heavens; during that of the second, the waters. The third was allotted to the production of the earth; the fourth, to the formation of trees and plants; and, during the fifth, the various tribes of animals received their existence. The sixth space of time, in almost exact conformity with the sixth day of the Mosaical cosmogony, was devoted solely to the creation of man.²

V. Quitting the realms of Persia, let us next direct our attention to the empire of Hindostan.

¹ Sanchon. apud Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. i. c. 10.

² Hyde de rel. vet. Pers. p. 162.

The institutes of Menu are supposed, by a great Orientalist,¹ to have been composed no less than 1280 years before the Christian era ; consequently, the Author of them must have flourished not very long after the days of Moses. This Hindoo tract commences with the following account of the creation.

Menu sat reclined, with his attention fixed on one object, the supreme God ; when the divine sages approached him, and after mutual salutations, in due form, delivered the following address : Deign, sovereign Ruler, to apprise us of the sacred laws in their order ; for thou, Lord, and thou only among mortals, knowest the true sense, the first principle, and the prescribed ceremonies, of this universal, supernatural Veda ; unlimited in extent, and unequalled in authority.

He, whose powers were measureless, being thus requested by the great sages, saluted them all with reverence, and gave them a comprehensive answer, saying, Be it heard !

This universe existed only in the first Divine idea, yet unexpanded, as if involved in darkness, imperceptible, undefinable, undiscoverable by reason, and undiscovered by revelation. Then the sole self-existing power, himself undiscerned, but making this world discernible, appeared with undiminished glory, dispelling the gloom. He, whom the mind alone can perceive, whose essence eludes the external organs, who has no visible parts, who exists

¹ Sir W. Jones, in Pref. to Inst. of Menu.

from eternity, even he, the soul of all beings, whom no being can comprehend, shone forth in person.

He, having willed to produce various beings from his own divine substance, first, with a thought, created the waters,¹ and placed in them a productive seed; the seed became an egg, bright as gold, blazing like the luminary, with a thousand beams; and in that egg he was born himself, in the form of Brahma, the great forefather of all spirits. The waters are called nara, because they were the production of Nara, or the Spirit of God; and, since they were his first ayana, or place of motion, he is thence named Narayana, or, moving on the waters.

From that which is the first cause, not the object of sense, existing every where in substance, not existing to our perception, without beginning or end, was produced the divine male, famed in all worlds under the appellation of Brahma. In that egg the great power sat inactive a whole year of the Creator, at the close of which, by his thought alone, he caused the egg to divide itself. And from its two divisions he framed the heaven above, and the earth beneath; in the midst, he placed the subtle ether, the eight regions, and the permanent receptacle of waters. From the supreme soul he drew forth mind, existing substantially, though unperceived by sense, immaterial; and before mind,

¹ Similar to this is the language of the officiating Brahmen in the beginning of the Prologue to *Sacotala*; *Water*, says he, *was the first work of the Creator.*

or the reasoning power, he produced consciousness, the internal monitor, the ruler.

Thus having at once pervaded, with emanations from the supreme Spirit, the minutest portions of six principles, immensely operative, consciousness, and the five perceptions, he framed all creatures—He, too, first assigned to all creatures distinct names, distinct acts, and distinct occupations—He, the supreme Ruler, created an assemblage of inferior deities, with divine attributes, and pure souls; and a number of genii, exquisitely delicate; and he prescribed the sacrifice ordained from the beginning—He gave being to time, and the divisions of time, to the stars also, and to the planets, to rivers, oceans, and mountains; to level plains, and uneven valleys—for he willed the existence of all those created things. For the sake of distinguishing actions, he made a total difference between right and wrong, and enured these sentient creatures to pleasure and pain, cold and heat, and other opposite pairs—He, whose powers are incomprehensible, having thus created both me and this universe, was again absorbed in the supreme Spirit, changing the time of energy for the time of repose.¹

VI. After Hindostan, our attention may properly be called to the neighbouring realm of China, which resembles it in its claims to an almost unfathomable antiquity, and which at all events we may certainly allow to be a primitive empire,

¹ Institutes of Menu, chap. i.

The account of the creation, according to the old traditions preserved by the Chinese, does not indeed descend to the minute particularities of the preceding one ; but is nevertheless little inferior to it in point of accuracy. It is said, that they call the first of men *Puoncu* ; and that they believe him to have been born out of chaos, the allegorical mundane egg of oriental mythology. From the shell of this egg, in the deep gloom of night, were formed the heavens ; from the white of it, the atmosphere ; and from its yolk, the earth. The order of creation was however as follows ; the heavens were first made ; the foundations of the earth were next laid ; the atmosphere was then diffused round the habitable globe ; and last of all man was created.¹

VII. It has been already observed, that the Persians believed the world to have been created at six different times : the same remark may also be made upon the cosmogony of the ancient Etrurians.

We are informed by Suidas, that a sage of that nation wrote a history, in which it is said, that God created the universe in six thousand years, and that he appointed the same period of time to be the extent of its duration. In the first millenary, he made the heaven and the earth ; in the second, the visible firmament ; in the third, the sea, and all the waters that are in the earth ; in the fourth, the sun, the moon, and the stars ; in

¹ Martin. Hist. Sin. p. 13. Coupl. Præf. ad Sin. Chron. p. 4.

the fifth, every living soul of birds, reptiles, and quadrupeds, which have their abode either in the air, on the land, or in the waters ; and lastly, in the sixth, man alone.

It appears therefore, that, according to the system of the Etrurians, five millenaries preceded the formation of man, to which the whole of the sixth was devoted ; and that the remaining period comprehends the entire duration of the human race. So that the age of the world, from its commencement to its termination, will amount precisely to twelve thousand years.¹

VIII. In the traditions also of our Gothic ancestors, blended as they are with the most extravagant fictions, some remains of the truth are still discoverable.

At the beginning of time, they are the words of the Voluspa, when nothing was yet formed, neither shore, nor sea, nor foundations beneath ; when the earth was no where to be found below, nor the heaven above : all was one vast abyss without plant or verdure—That part of it which lies towards the north, was filled with a mass of gelid vapours and ice ; while its interior was replete with whirlwinds and tempests. Directly opposite to it, rose the southern side of the abyss, formed of the lightnings and sparks which flow from the world of fire—As to that part which lay between these two extremes, it was light and serene, like the air in a calm. A breath of heat

¹ SUIDE LEXIC. vox Τυφφηνια.

then spreading itself over the gelid vapours, they melted into drops ; and of these drops was formed a man, by the power of him who governed. This man was named Ymer—from him are descended all the families of the giants.

An account is next given of a patriarch, to whom were born three sons. Between this race and that of the giants an incessant warfare was carried on, which at length terminated in the death of Ymer. That event produced a deluge, in which all the giants perished, excepting one, who saved himself in his bark. The whole of his household escaped at the same time, and by him was preserved the race of the giants. At this period, according to the Gothic mythology, a second creation took place; an event allusive to the renovation of the world after the waters of the deluge: the three victorious sons of the Patriarch were elevated to the rank of deities: and the earth was repopled with a new race of inhabitants, differing, in point of origin, from their predecessors. The bright luminaries of heaven now began to shine, and every star *had its assigned residence. Hence the days were distinguished, and the years reduced to calculation. For this reason it is said, in the poem of Voluspa, Formerly the sun knew not its place, the moon was ignorant of its powers, and the stars knew not the stations they were to occupy.*¹

IX. We may equally trace the relics of pri-

¹ Edda. Fab. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

meval tradition in the theories of the Greek philosophers.

1. The ancient Orphic writer taught, that in the beginning were Chaos and a thick darkness enveloping all things; that the earth lay for a season invisible beneath the darkness; that light then burst forth, and illuminated the hitherto obscure globe of the earth; that this light was the greatest of all beings; that the sun, the moon, the earth, and the stars, were all produced out of Chaos; and that man was formed out of the dust, and was endued with a rational soul, by a supreme creative divinity.¹

2. Linus is said to have asserted, that there was once a time, when all things were by nature confusedly blended together.²

3. Zeno maintained, that the Chaos of Hesiod was a turbid water, out of which was formed the Universe; and that the solid earth was gradually concreted from the subsiding mud.³

4. Anaxagoras taught, that all things were once mixed together, and that Intelligence reduced them to order.⁴

5. Thales asserted, that water was the origin of the Universe, and that God was that supreme Intelligence who formed all things out of water.⁵

¹ Cedren. Hist. Compend. p. 57. Johan. Malal. Chronog. p. 89, 90.

² Aristot. Metaph. lib. xiv. c. 6.

³ Schol. in Apoll. Argon. lib. iv. ver. 676.

⁴ Diog. Laert. in vit. Anaxag.

⁵ Cicero. de nat. deor. lib. i. c. 10. Diog. Laert. in vit. Thal.

6. And Aristophanes has handed down to us an ancient cosmogonical theory, which taught, that *Chaos*, and *Night*, and black *Erebus*, and wide *Tartarus*, first existed : that, at that time, there was neither earth, nor air, nor heaven : but that, in the bosom of *Erebus*, black-winged *Night* produced an ærial egg ; from which, in due season, was born *Love* decked with golden wings : and that this primeval personage, celebrated as the great universal father, begot our race out of dark *Chaos* in the midst of wide-spreading *Tartarus*, and called us forth into light.¹

X. Even in America we shall meet with some obscure traces of primitive tradition.

1. According to Gomara, the Peruvians believed, that, at the beginning of the world, there came from the north a being named *Con*, who levelled mountains and raised hills solely by the word of his mouth : that he filled the earth with men and women whom he had created, giving them fruits and bread and all things necessary for their subsistence : but that, being offended with their transgressions, he deprived them of the blessings which they had originally enjoyed, and afflicted their lands with a curse of sterility.²

2. The legend of the Virginians equally deserves our attention. It is said by Hariot, that they suppose the world to have been made by one Supreme Being, but that the immediate act of creation was

¹ Aristoph. Av. ver. 694.

² Gomar. Hist. Gen. c. 122. apud Purch. Pilgr. b. ix. c. 10.

devolved by him upon other secondary deities. Agreeing with the traditions of nearly every nation upon the face of the earth, and fully according with the cosmogony of Moses, they believe water to have been first produced and afterwards to have been used as the principle out of which all other things were formed.¹

3. Much more complicated is the theory of the Aztecks or Mexicans: and, from the peculiarity of its arrangement, there can be little doubt, that their ancestors brought it with them out of Asia.

A very ancient opinion prevailed among the Gentiles, which by the Hindoos has been drawn out perhaps more distinctly than by any other people, though traces of it may be observed in almost every quarter of the globe, that neither the present world, nor the antediluvian world, were the sole mundane systems which have existed. Some, like the Hindoos, taught an eternal succession of similar worlds, each commencing with a patriarch and his three sons, and each terminating with a deluge either aqueous or igneous. Others, more moderate in their conceptions, limited the number: though they were far from agreeing in the precise tale of these great material revolutions.²

On this principle is built the cosmogonic system of the Azteck mythology: and it is a principle, in

¹ Purch. Pilgr. book viii. c. 6.

² See this curious subject fully discussed in my *Origin of Pagan Idol.* book i. c. 2.

itself so arbitrary, that it sufficiently evinces the foreign origination of that system.

The nations of Mexico, says Gomara who wrote about the middle of the sixteenth century, believe, according to their hieroglyphical paintings, that, previous to the sun which now enlightens them, four had already been successively extinguished. These suns presided over the same number of ages or mundane cycles, at the close of the four first of which the human species has successively been destroyed by some universal and overwhelming calamity. It is worthy of observation, that the order of the four first worlds has been exactly inverted by Rios, Gomara, Clavigero, and many other Spanish authors; in consequence of their not attending to the circumstance, that the Mexicans read their hieroglyphics from right to left, and that they begin at the bottom of the page. By this error, a very remarkable attestation to the truth of Scripture has been greatly marred, though not absolutely destroyed; and *that* in consequence of a mere dislocation. The real order of succession is as follows: what the error has been may be easily collected, by reading the series invertedly.

We are told then, that the inhabitants of the first world perished by famine; and that the giants, who escaped from this calamity, were devoured by tigers. The hieroglyphic painting represents a malignant spirit, descending on the earth to root up the grass and the flowers: and near him stand three human figures, the relics of a desolated world, holding in their right hands a sharp

edged instrument and in their left fruit or ears of corn.

To the cycle of famine succeeds the age of fire: and the second world is destined to perish by the igneous element. The god of fire descends upon the earth, as the agent of destruction: and, since the birds alone were able to escape the general conflagration, tradition says, that all men were transformed into birds, except a single person and his wife, who saved themselves in the recess of a cavern to be the parents of a new race.

The third cycle is the age of wind: and the painting represents an exterminating deity, who descends on the perishing earth armed with a sickle. All mankind were then either swept away by hurricanes, or were transformed into apes. Two persons only survived the catastrophe by taking refuge in a cavern as at the end of the preceding age.

Next to the age of wind comes the age of water. This is the last of the great revolutions, which the world has undergone. At the close of the fourth world, a mighty inundation either destroyed all mankind or converted them into fishes, except one man and one woman, who saved themselves in a boat made out of the trunk of a tree, and who at length landed on the emerging peak of mount Colhuacan. Yet, when the fourth sun was annihilated, the world was plunged in darkness during the space of twenty-five years: and, in the midst of this profound obscurity, ten years before the appearance of the fifth sun, mankind was for the last time regenerated.

I shall hereafter have occasion to notice more at large the final mundane dissolution of Azteck theology, which is plainly the deluge of Noah : at present I need only observe, that, by reading the Mexican paintings in their proper series, the age of water occurs in its right place.¹

XI. The number of days employed in the work of creation, and the divine rest on the seventh day, produced that peculiar measure of time ; which is purely arbitrary, and which does not spring, like a day or a month or a year, from the natural motions of the heavenly bodies. Hence the general adoption of the hebdomadal period is itself a proof, how widely a knowledge of the true cosmogonical system was diffused among the posterity of Noah : though, in process of time, the original revelation was either perverted to atheism, or lamentably corrupted by an admixture of idolatrous fable. To prevent however the recurrence of such an evil, Moses was finally inspired to give a perfectly exact account of the commencement of the world, and was directed to commit that account to imperishable writing.

In almost every part of the globe, we find the week used as a familiar measure of time ; and, in close union with it, we may commonly observe

¹ Humboldt's Researches. vol. ii, p. 15—33. Purchas. Pilgr. book viii. c. 13. p. 806. In my Origin of Pagan Idolatry, I have given this Mexican legend in its inverted order ; to which I was led by following the Spanish writers from whom Purchas copies. See Orig. of Pag. Idol. book i. c. 2. § x.

some traces of the sabbath. Nor is this to be wondered at : for, as Noah undoubtedly reckoned by weeks, as it is highly improbable that he was the first who did so, and as therefore the obvious inference is that he only adhered to a practice which he had received in regular succession from Adam ; we may naturally conclude, that he, in like manner, would hand down the same practice to his descendants.¹ The general use then of the week must have sprung from a remote tradition of the grand week of the creation, which was never totally obliterated from the memory of the Gentiles. Accordingly, as we have seen above, both the ancient Persians and the ancient Etrurians conspicuously introduced it into their several cosmogonies ; distributing, like Moses, the demiurgic labour into six successive portions.

1. With respect to the sanctity of the sabbath, a doctrine received by the Gentiles not from Moses but from Noah, Eusebius, in his *Præparatio Evangelica*, quotes several of the elder poets, who speak of the seventh day as being peculiarly holy.

Thus Hesiod and Homer both unite in ascribing to it a degree of superior sanctity : and thus Callimachus asserts, that on it all things were finished.² Thus again the hebdomadal sabbath is said to have been observed among the ancient inhabitants of Arabia, previous to the era of Mohammed³; consequently, although that impostor confirmed the

¹ See Gen. viii. 10, 12.

² Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. xiii. c. 13.

observation of such an ordinance, he could not be said to have first enjoined it to his followers from the knowledge which he possessed of the books of Moses.¹ Thus also the natives of Pegu assemble together, for the purposes of devotion, on one fixed day in every week : ² and thus the people of Guinea rest from their accustomed occupations of fishing and agriculture, every seventh day throughout the year.³

2. As for the division of time into weeks, it extends from the Christian states of Europe to the remote shores of Hindostan, and has equally prevailed among the Jews and the Greeks, the Romans and the Goths ; nor will it be easy to account for this unanimity upon any other supposition, than that which is here adopted.

XII. Even the Mosaical method of reckoning by nights instead of by days, has prevailed in more than one nation.

The polished Athenians computed the space of a day from sunset to sunset ; ⁴ and from a similar custom of our Gothic ancestors, during their abode in the forests of Germany, words expressive of such a mode of calculation have been derived into our own language.⁵ The same custom, as we are informed by Cesar, prevailed among the Celtic

¹ Purch. Pilgrim. b. iii. c. 2.

² Ibid. b. v. c. 5.

³ Ibid. b. vi. c. 15.

⁴ Aul. Gell. Noct. Attic. lib. iii. c. 2.

⁵ Tacit. de Mor. Germ. § 11. We still use the expressions *fortnight* and *se'nnight*, or fourteen nights and seven nights.

nations. *All the Gauls*, says he, *conceive themselves to be sprung from father Dis, and they affirm it to have been handed down to them by the Druids. For this reason, they measure time not by the number of days, but of nights. Accordingly, they observe their birth-days and the beginnings of months and years, in such a manner, as to cause the day to follow the night.*¹

XIII. The result of the whole inquiry is, that the accurate resemblance between the Mosaical account of the creation, and the various cosmogonies of the Heathen world, sufficiently shews, that they all originated from one common source; while the striking contrast, between the unadorned simplicity of the one and the allegorical turgidity of the others, accurately distinguishes the inspired narrative from the distorted tradition.²

¹ Cæs. de Bell. Gall. lib. vi. cap. 18.

² It may be proper here to observe, that the ancient pagans did not admit any *proper* creation of the world. What we from Scripture esteem its creation, *they* believed to be only its reproduction from a deluge anterior to that of Noah. Hence their cosmogonies are perpetually intermingled with allusions to the flood. See my *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*. book i. c. 1. § 1. 4, 5, 7. c. 2, 5. book iii. c. 4.

CHAP. III.

PAGAN ACCOUNTS OF THE PERIOD BETWEEN
THE CREATION AND THE DELUGE.

THE events, which took place between the creation of the world and the deluge, are buried in such remote antiquity, that we are not to expect any very methodical and accurate account of them among the pagan nations. Their annals seldom extended beyond the catastrophè of the flood, which formed an almost impenetrable barrier to the excursions of curiosity; yet, notwithstanding this circumstance, the antediluvian history of Moses will be found obscurely recorded in many profane traditions.

I. The Author of the Pentateuch, after having described the process of the creation, informs us, that man was placed by the Deity in the garden of Paradise.

This favoured portion of the earth is represented, as containing within itself every external object capable of conferring happiness. The beauty of its scenery, the salubrity of its climate, the variety

and excellence of its fruits, all contributed to the beatitude of the first pair ; and tended to elevate their thoughts to that Being, who was the author and contriver of such numerous blessings. Considered in this point of view, it was equally a delightful residence for man and a magnificent natural temple consecrated to the service of God. Its very name conveyed the idea of happiness and pleasure ; which can only exist in their full perfection, when the will of man thoroughly coincides with the will of God, and when obedience is not a painful act of self-denial.

The beauty of the garden of Paradise cannot be conveyed to our minds in a stronger light, than by considering, that heaven itself is frequently designated by this very appellation. *To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*, was the consolatory promise of our blessed Saviour to the penitent thief. *If, therefore, we are taught, to use the words of a late pious prelate, that heaven resembles the garden of Eden, it seems fair and reasonable to conclude, that the garden of Eden resembled heaven, and was, from the beginning, intended to do so : that, like the temple under the Law and the church under the Gospel, it was, to its happy possessors, a place chosen for the residence of God ; a place designed to represent and furnish them with ideas of heavenly things ; a place sacred to contemplation and devotion : in one word, it was the primitive temple and church, formed and consecrated for the use of man in his state of innocence. There, undisturbed by care and as yet unassailed by temp-*

tation, all his faculties perfect and all his appetites in subjection, he walked with God as a man walketh with his friend, and enjoyed communion with heaven though his abode was upon earth. He studied the works of God, as they came fresh from the hands of the workmaster ; and in the creation, as in a glass, he was taught to behold the glories of the Creator. Trained, in the school of Eden by the material elements of a visible world, to the knowledge of one that is immaterial and invisible, he found himself excited by the beauty of the picture to aspire after the transcendant excellence of the divine original.¹

Such was the Paradise of Scripture ; and from it the Heathens derived that belief in a state of pristine integrity and that idea of the peculiar sacredness of groves, which prevailed so universally among them.

1. A notion appears to have been very widely diffused, that mankind formerly lived in complete happiness and unstained innocence ; that spring reigned perpetually, and that the earth spontaneously gave her increase.

Immediately after the birth of man, says Hesiod, the golden age commenced, the precious gift of the immortals who acknowledged Cronus as their sovereign. Mankind then led the life of the gods, free from tormenting cares, and exempt from labour and sorrow. Old age was unknown ; their limbs were braced with a perpetual vigour ;

¹ Bp. Horne's Serm. vol. i. p. 68.

*and the evils of disease were unfelt. When the hour of dissolution arrived, death assumed the mild aspect of sleep, and laid aside all his terrors. Every blessing was theirs; the fruits of the earth sprang up spontaneously and abundantly; peace reigned, and her companions were happiness and pleasure.*¹

2. A similar opinion may be distinctly traced in the legends of our Scythian forefathers.

According to the usual doctrine of the Gentiles, the first inhabitants of the world were considered by the Gothic mythologists as something more than human. Their abode was a magnificent hall, glittering with burnished gold; the mansion of love, joy, and friendship: the very meanest of their utensils were composed of the same precious materials: and the age acquired the denomination of *golden*. Such was the happiness of the primitive race of mortals; a happiness, which they were destined not long to enjoy. The blissful period of innocence too soon expired: certain women arrived from the country of the giants: and these, by their seductive blandishments, corrupted its pristine integrity and purity.²

The circumstance, which principally deserves notice in this ancient tradition, is the cause assigned by the Goths for the termination of their golden age. Its integrity was corrupted by female seduction: and thus sin and misery were intro-

¹ HESIOD. Op. et Dier. lib. i. l. 108.

² Edda. Fab. vii.

duced into the world. Perhaps we cannot positively determine, whether this be an allusion to the fatal transgression of our first parent, or whether it may not rather refer to the intercourse between the sons of Seth and the daughters of Cain which was the principal cause of the universal wickedness of the antediluvians.¹ In either case, its coincidence with the page of Scripture is not a little remarkable.

3. A similar belief in an original state of purity is strenuously maintained by the inhabitants of Hindostan.

There can arise little doubt, to use the words of an elegant modern Historian, but that, by the Satya age or age of perfection, the Brahmens obscurely allude to the state of perfection and happiness enjoyed by man in Paradise. It is impossible to explain what the Indian writers assert, concerning the universal purity of manners and the luxurious and unbounded plenty prevailing in that primitive era, without this supposition. Justice, truth, philanthropy, were then practised among all the orders and classes of mankind; there was then no extortion, no circumvention, no fraud used in their dealings one with another. Perpetual oblations smoked on the altars of the Deity; every tongue uttered praises, and every heart glowed with gratitude to the supreme Creator. The Gods, in token of their approbation of the conduct of mortals, condescended frequently to become incarnate,

¹ Gen. vi. 2, 4.

and to hold personal converse with the yet undepraved race of mortals ; to instruct them in arts and sciences ; to unveil their own sublime functions and pure nature ; and make them acquainted with the economy of those celestial regions, into which they were to be immediately translated, when the period of their terrestrial probation expired.¹

Nor is this notion of late origin among the Hindoos ; Calanus, according to Strabo, holds much the same language. *Formerly, says he, corn of all sorts abounded as plentifully as dust does at present ; and the fountains poured forth streams, some of water, some of milk, some of honey, some of wine, and some of oil. Owing to this luxurious abundance, man became corrupt, and fell into all kinds of wickedness ; inasmuch that Jupiter, disgusted with such a scene, abolished the ancient order of things, and permitted the necessities of life to be obtained only through the medium of labour.²*

4. It is remarkable, that the account, which the Hindoos give of their Paradise, coincides with the Mosaical description of the primeval garden even in particulars altogether arbitrary.

The Hebrew lawgiver informs us, that a river went out of Eden to water the garden ; that from thence it was divided into four heads or subordinate streams ; that, in the midst of the garden, was the tree of knowledge ; and that, when man was

¹ Maurice's Anc. Hist. of Hindostan. vol. i. p. 371, 372.

² Strab. Geog. lib. xv. p. 715. p. 314—323.

expelled, a guard of Cherubim was placed at the eastern passes leading to it.

In a similar manner, the summit of the holy mount Meru is considered by the Indian divines as a celestial earth, the abode of the immortals. It is said to be of four different colours towards the four cardinal points ; and is believed to be propped by four enormous buttresses of gold, iron, silver, and copper. One vast river rises from under the feet of Vishnou : and, after passing through the circle of the moon, it falls upon the top of Meru, where it divides into four streams flowing to the four cardinal points of heaven. These four rivers boil up from the roots of Jambu ; a tree of most extravagant size, which is thought to convey knowledge and to effect the accomplishment of every human wish : and, in the eastern passes leading to this blissful abode, is placed a celestial guard, who, like the Cherubim, unites together the forms of a man and an eagle.*

5. We may equally discover, in the classical story of the garden of the Hesperides, an evident tradition of the Mosaical Paradise and of the promised Saviour who should bruise the head of the infernal dragon.

Speaking of the constellation of the serpent, Eratosthenes says, *this is the same as that, which guarded the golden apples and was slain by Hercules. For, according to Pherecydes, when all the gods offered presents to Juno on her nuptials with*

* Asiat. Res. vol. vi. p. 486—493. vol. viii.

Jupiter, the Earth also brought golden apples. Juno, admiring their beauty, commanded them to be planted in the garden of the gods; and, finding that they were continually plucked by the daughters of Atlas, appointed a vast serpent to guard them. Hercules overcame and slew the monster. In this constellation, accordingly, the serpent is depicted rearing aloft its head; while Hercules, placed above it with one knee bent, tramples with his foot upon its head, and brandishes his club in his right hand.¹

6. From the holiness of the garden of Eden, the Pagans probably borrowed their ancient custom of consecrating groves to the worship of their various deities.

That such was the case with the inhabitants of Canaan, appears abundantly from numerous passages of Scripture, in which the tendency of the Israelites to this mode of idolatry is severely reprobated. Tacitus mentions a similar custom as being prevalent among the Semnones, a tribe of the Germans, and likewise among several other clans of the same nation.² This ancient mode of worship prevailed also among the Celts: and the Druidical rites were solemnized in mystic circles of huge rocks, concealed from the gaze of profane eyes in the deep gloom of immense forests.³ In a similar manner,

¹ Eratos. Catast. § 3, 4. See also Hyg. Poet. Astron. p. 361, 369. Lucret. de Nat. Rer. lib. v. ver. 33. Raleigh's Hist. of the World. p. 73.

² Tacit. de Mor. Germ. § 39, 40.

³ See Lucan's very striking description of the Massilian grove. Pharsal. lib. iii. ver. 399—425.

we are informed by Pliny, that, among the Romans, trees were formerly the temples of the deities : and he adds, that, even in his time, according to the ancient rites, the simple peasantry yet dedicated to some god every tree, which surpassed the rest in beauty or magnitude.¹ Nor have the Hindoos in all ages been less addicted to the sacred grove. In the ancient drama of Sacontala, the emperor Dushmanta styles one of these holy woods *an awful sanctuary* ; confesses, that it *must not be violated* ; declares, that *groves devoted to religion must be entered in humbler habiliments* than those of a prince ; and on that account, ere he ventures to penetrate the recesses of such an asylum, he studiously divests himself of his *regal ornaments*.² The same superstition was equally familiar to the Egyptians. . . Quintus Curtius has handed down to us a very interesting description of the sacred grove of Jupiter Hammon, which was planted round his temple in one of the Oases. His language is singularly beautiful ; and almost presents to the imagination the delicious climate, the deep shades, and the crystal streams, of Eden. *At length*, says he, *they arrived at the consecrated habitation of the deity ; which, incredible as it may seem, is situated in the midst of a vast desert, and is shaded from the sun by so luxuriant a vegetation that its beams can scarcely penetrate through the thickness of the foliage. The groves are watered by the*

¹ Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xii. c. 1.

² Sacont. Act. i. translated by Sir W. Jones.

*meandering streams of numerous fountains ; and a wonderful temperature of climate, resembling most of all the delightful season of spring, prevails through the whole year with an equal degree of salubrity.*¹ Very similar is the description, which Virgil gives of the Elysian fields or the fortunate islands.² Nor was this done accidentally : for the real prototype of Elysium was Paradise. From the same source we may deduce the practice, which so generally prevails among ourselves. We rarely behold a country church unattended by a sacred grove, at once its shelter and its most appropriate ornament.

Thus, even long after the time that Paradise was forfeited, sweet was its remembrance to the sons of Adam, and delightful was every image which could recal it to their recollection. The grove formed a part equally in their pleasures, and in their religious rites : the sage delighted to muse beneath its cooling shades : and the most solemn offices of a splendid, though perverted, worship were performed within its gloomy recesses.

II. The duration of man's happiness in the garden of Eden is not specified. We only know, that he transgressed the commandment of God, and that by this fatal transgression he introduced into the world sin and misery.

Mysterious as may be the doctrine of hereditary

¹ Quint. Curt. lib. iv. c. 7.

² Æncid. lib. vi. ver. 637—681. See the subject of grove-worship discussed at large in my Orig. of Pagan Idol. book v. c. 7. § 1. 5. II. 10, 11.

depravation, and utterly impossible as I believe it to adduce any satisfactory hypothesis *as to the mode of its transmission*; still the doctrine itself rests upon the sure basis both of Scripture and of experience.

We are taught, that *every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually*; ¹ that *the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked*; ² that man is *shapen in iniquity*, and that *in sin does his mother conceive him*.³ To the same conclusion also we are inevitably brought by the circumstance of infants being liable to death, no less than adults. The argument of the apostle runs: *As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*.⁴ Now from this argument the conclusion is sufficiently obvious. Death, in every instance, is declared to be the penalty of sin. But it is a fact, that mere infants, before the commission of any actual sin, are often cut off by the hand of death. Infants however would not die at all, unless they were sinners in some mode or other: for we are expressly assured, that death is invariably the penalty of sin. Therefore, as infants are liable to this penalty before the commission of actual sin, they can only be liable to it on account of the taint of hereditary pravity. I may add, that the doctrine in question is supposed and required by the doctrine of regeneration, as taught by our Lord himself. A change of heart could not

¹ Gen. vi. 5.

² Jerem. xvii. 9.

³ Psalm li. 5.

⁴ Rom. v. 12.

be necessary in all, unless the hearts of all had been previously corrupted. But the language of Christ is express, both as to this universal necessity, and as to this universal corruption. *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That, which is born of the flesh, is flesh : and that, which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.*¹

With the decision of Scripture our actual experience perfectly accords. A mere corrupt imitation of Adam, or a mere erroneous view of right and wrong produced by early false impressions, is not, I think, sufficient to account for what we feel and see. If we be all born with souls in the same condition as those of our first parents before the fall, it is passing strange, that out of so many millions there should not have been *one* who preferred good to evil ; it is passing strange, that *all* should have chosen to imitate what is bad. Or, if the whole mass of depravity which exists in the world is to be resolved into an erroneous view of right and wrong produced by early false impressions : how happens it, that infants, who as yet can have taken no such erroneous view, are nevertheless (according to St. Paul's reasoning) convicted of being sinful creatures by the very circumstance of their frequent death ; how happens it, when this erroneous view of things has been rectified and when the judgment has been fully convinced of its falsehood, that the will and the affections remain

¹ John iii. 5, 6.

as stubbornly bent upon evil as ever? It is sufficiently evident, that both these theories mainly, if not altogether, respect *outward* actions. But outward actions are, in truth, mere ramifications of an inward principle : and this inward principle, which constitutes at once the proof and the essence of original sin, still continues to exist and to manifest itself in an aversion from good and in a strong bias to evil ; even when, so far as the bare intellect is concerned, our view of right and wrong is strictly accurate. Now, if hereditary depravation consisted entirely in an erroneous view of these matters influencing our conduct through the deception of our judgment ; I should conceive, that, when once our judgment was rectified by dissolving that false association of ideas which has misled it, our hereditary depravation would be at an end : for remove the cause, and the effect must cease. But experience teaches us, that nothing of the sort really takes place. Though the intellect may be fully convinced, the will and the affections are still unreclaimed : and, even when a man has been born again of the Holy Spirit implanting in him a new will and new desires, the ancient taint, though corrected, is by no means eradicated. He still perceives the inward workings of his mind to be precisely those so graphically described by the great apostle. *I find a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man : but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law*

of sin which is in my members.[†] Hence the Church of England well decides, that *this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated* :^{*} and the experience of every person, who is even moderately conversant with his own heart, will compel him to allow the justice of her decision. Let us disguise the unpleasant truth as we please, let us invent what qualifications and excuses we most affect ; still the real matter of fact will be, that we none of us naturally love God and religion, *as God and religion are exhibited to us in the Bible*. We may indeed easily picture to ourselves such a God and such a religion as we feel no repugnance to : and thence, *because* we feel no repugnance to them, we may deny or extenuate the blackness of our hereditary taint. But this is a mere voluntary self-deception. Would we deal with sincerity, we must prove the state of our affections, not by unreal phantoms of the imagination, but by the God and the religion of the Scriptures. Let us *thus* prove them ; and we shall find ourselves obliged to confess, that spiritual things enter not naturally into our schemes of happiness. We turn away from them with a sense of weariness and disgust : we feel it a relief to us, when we *have* turned away : our minds then seem to have at once recovered their elasticity, and our tongues their volubility ; much as we may all have felt, when peradventure we have happily effected our escape from the dragging wearisomeness of a dull

[†] Rom. vii. 21, 22, 23.^{*} Art, ix,

and tedious and formal visit. Now this condition of *the mind*, though various circumstances may prevent a breaking forth into gross outward sin, I take to be the very essence of original pravity. By what process or through what means we receive our baleful inheritance, I consider it quite vain and fruitless to inquire. To every theory, which I have yet encountered, there seem to me insuperable objections: but still, *as a naked matter of fact*, we might as well doubt our very existence, as doubt that natural alienation of the heart from God which constitutes the sum and substance of hereditary sin.

The commencement of this taint is ascribed by the author of the Pentateuch to the disobedience of our first parents. An evil spirit, the origination of whose malignity is itself a mystery which can never be fathomed, speaking through the organs of a serpent, tempted them to transgress the command of God by tasting the forbidden fruit of a distinctly specified tree. The penalty of their rebellion was death. *In the day that thou eatest thereof*, said the Lord to Adam, *thou shalt surely die.*¹

Various traditions, more or less agreeable to this

¹ Gen. ii. 17. The general opinion, respecting the purport of these words either expressed or implied, is, that the soul of Adam should be separated from his body by natural death, and that it should likewise be eternally alienated from God by what is called in Scripture *the second death*. Some able writers however have denied the propriety of the latter part of the gloss; and have contended, that the punishment was in

account, have been preserved in the records of Paganism.

truth only the loss of immortality: so that, had no remedy been found in the divine counsels, every man would by death have experienced a total annihilation of his being. A remedy however was found in the atonement; by virtue of which man recovered his lost immortality, though he still remained subject to temporal death.

I. The grand argument, used in favour of this interpretation, seems to me to prove nothing by proving too much.

It is urged, that the words, *Thou shalt surely die*, agreeably to their general use in other parts of Scripture, cannot without much force be made to signify the *second death* in addition to the *first or merely temporal death*.

For the sake of argument, let this be granted: but what then will follow? If it be unwarrantable to add the idea of the *second death* to the simple idea of the *first death*, why is it more warrantable to add to the simple idea of *temporal death* the idea also of *absolute annihilation*? We are required, it seems, to adhere to the strict literal meaning of the words, *Thou shalt surely die*. Be it so. The strict literal meaning then of the words is the *death of the body*. Consequently, if we have no right to say, that they involve the additional idea of a *spiritual and eternal death*; neither can we have any right to say, that they involve the equally additional idea of the *annihilation of the soul*. By the bare letter therefore we must limit the penalty to the *body*. Hence, if the soul of Adam *before* the fall were destined for immortality, it must be a mere gratuitous assertion to say, that by the penal death of the body the soul would be annihilated: and, if *before* the fall it were *not* destined for immortality, then the loss of immortality could not have been caused *by* the fall, and therefore could not possibly have been a punishment. Such being the case, since we have no proof that the soul's annihilation was included in the penalty of the body's death, and since the very terms of the denunciation necessarily imply its *original* immortality (for death would be no punishment, if Adam would *equally* have died, whether

1. The entire ritual of expiatory sacrifice must evidently be viewed, as founded upon a direct ac-

he had fallen or not): then the soul of our first parent, for any thing that appears to the contrary, would still have continued to exist *after* his body had paid the penalty described in the two phrases *Thou shalt surely die* and *Unto dust shalt thou return*. But, if his soul would have continued to exist after the death of his body, in what condition must it have existed? *Without holiness*, we are assured, *no man shall see the Lord*; a decision, which is not arbitrary, but which rests upon the immutable nature and the eternal fitness of things. Now it cannot be denied, that the soul of Adam ceased to be holy by reason of rebellious transgression; just as, on the very same grounds, the spirits of Satan and his angels ceased to be holy: nor have we any better warrant for asserting, that his soul would recover its holiness by the mere circumstance of his body's undergoing the penalty of death; than we have for asserting, that Satan and his angels will recover their holiness from the circumstance of their undergoing the penalty of hell-fire. But, if the soul of Adam became unholy by the fall, and if it did not forfeit its immortality by the sentence of death passed upon the body (which we have not even a shadow of proof to have been the case); it must, by the circumstance of its unholiness, have been excluded from the presence of God: and, as its immortality remained unaffected by the death of the body, this exclusion could not but be eternal.

In short, it is most erroneously asserted, that they, who believe the penalty of Adam's transgression to have been death both temporal and eternal, gratuitously annex to the words, *Thou shalt surely die*, an additional sense which they cannot naturally bear. Persons, who thus believe, are fully aware, that the words themselves strictly denote *the death of the body*. But, as they have seen no proof that these words farther denote *the annihilation of the soul*, and as they consequently do not feel themselves warranted in asserting that the soul's annihilation formed a part of Adam's penalty; they are at a loss how to dis-

knowledge of human apostasy : for, unless an idea of lost integrity had pervaded the whole world,

pose of an unholy soul agreeably to the universal tenor of Scripture, save by inferring its necessary exclusion from the divine presence. It is in the way therefore of *induction* rather than of *interpretation*, that the words, *Thou shalt surely die*, are supposed to involve *the second death*. In their strict literal import, they *solely* mean *the death of the body* : nor is it contended, that they can be so interpreted as to denote additionally *the perdition of the soul*. The doctrine is deduced from them, not *grammatically*, but *inductively* ; not *by a strained exposition of the terms themselves*, but *by a circle of supposed unavoidable consequences*.

II. Another principal argument is to my own mind not at all more satisfactory than the last.

St. Paul teaches us, that, *as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*. Now ALL are *not* made alive in Christ in the sense of *eternal happiness* : therefore they must be so made alive in some other sense. But no other sense can be found, except that of *naked immortality without respect either to happiness or misery*. If such then be the meaning of the words, *In Christ shall all be made alive* : then the meaning of the opposed words, *In Adam all die*, must be, that *in Adam all men forfeit their immortality*.

This argument strikes me, rather as an ingenious sophism, than as a piece of solid reasoning. Accordingly, it is hampered with a difficulty from which it can never extricate itself. Christ is plainly described by the apostle as conferring a *general benefit* on the human race, while Adam is described as inflicting upon them a *general injury*. But, if *naked immortality* be what Christ is here said to confer and what all men are said to have forfeited in Adam ; then Christ (we have but too much reason to believe) has conferred upon a great majority of mankind an *injury* rather than a *benefit*. For, *exclusively of the atonement*, the wicked would only have been annihilated : but, *by virtue of it*, they are made heir to an immortality of suffer-

and unless the doctrine of such an aberration had been handed down from the most remote antiquity ; it is impossible to account for the universal estab-

ing. It is plain therefore, that their lot would have been infinitely preferable, if no atonement had ever been made by Christ.

With respect to the words of St. Paul, from which the argument now under consideration has been deduced, I should conceive their natural and obvious meaning to be this : that, *through the atonement, Christ purchased for man a capability of inheriting eternal glory, no less extensive than that death which was the penalty and consequence of the fall.* I readily allow, that in absolute logical strictness we have not here a perfect antithesis : but, from the general context of the whole passage, I am persuaded that we shall err if we require one. The apostle subsequently speaks of *this mortal putting on immortality.* Now, if he mean *naked immortality* viewed as that which was forfeited by a sentence of annihilation ; then, to those vast numbers whom Christ describes as walking in the broad way which leads to destruction, this *putting on of immortality* is no cause of triumphant joy. But St. Paul represents it as a cause of boundless joy : for says he, *when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in VICTORY, even victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* This putting on therefore of immortality cannot denote a *putting on of forfeited naked immortality both by bad and by good* : because such an event were assuredly no VICTORY to the wicked. But, by every rule of composition, the apostle speaks of the same sort of immortality throughout the whole passage. Therefore, when he says, *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive ;* he cannot mean a reversal of any imaginary sentence of annihilation by conferring upon all men both good and bad a naked immortality.

III. Having thus considered the arguments which are adduced in favour of the theory before us, I shall now in con-

ishment and recognition of so very peculiar an ordinance.

That the practice of devoting piacular victims

clusion proceed to bring forward an objection against its very principle.

It is easy to *speak* of annihilation as a punishment: but it is by no means easy to *form any distinct idea* of it under that particular aspect; it is by no means easy to comprehend with clearness its *very capability* of being employed as a penal infliction.

Annihilation most assuredly can be no punishment, *until* it be inflicted: but, when it *is* inflicted, it can still be no punishment; because the subject of it, by the very circumstance of his annihilation, has ceased to exist. For a non-entity is incapable of punishment: and we might just as well say, that a soul can be punished before it is brought into existence, as that it can be punished after it has been deprived of existence. In what manner then is it possible for annihilation to be any punishment at all?

To this question, there are but two even moderately plausible answers, which can be given.

1. It may be said, that the punishment of annihilation consists in that shrinking anticipation of evil, which will be felt during the period that occurs between the passing of the sentence and the carrying of it into effect.

But this answer, when analysed, is every way unsatisfactory. In the first place, it entirely shifts the ground: for, instead of making *annihilation itself* to be the punishment; it makes the whole punishment to consist, not in *annihilation*, but in the *anticipatory dread of annihilation*. And, in the second place, it somewhat childishly assumes *that* to be an object of horror, which on any rational principles cannot possibly be so: for it is hard to say, why a *future* state of non-existence should be a whit more terrible than a *past* state of non-existence, or why we should dread a condition in which we *could* not be unhappy *because* we should have become non-entities,

has, at one period or another, prevailed in every quarter of the globe; and that it has been alike adopted, both by the most barbarous and by the most civilized nations, can scarcely be said to need a regular and formal proof. Whether we direct our inquiries to the frozen north, or to the sultry regions of the south; whether we mount upon the wings of the morning and survey the mighty em-

2. It may however be further said, that, since deprivation of happiness once enjoyed must needs be a punishment, annihilation must be a punishment; because by annihilation Adam would have been deprived of the happiness which he once enjoyed.

Perhaps I need scarcely observe, that this answer, and indeed all the reasonings which assume annihilation to be a punishment, will be found to rest upon one of the grossest of all gross fallacies. Deprivation of happiness is no doubt a severe punishment to a being, which *continues subsequently* to exist, and which *retains* its full consciousness: but how can it be any punishment to a being, which of course must *lose* all consciousness by the very circumstance of its annihilation? In discussing the present subject, we perpetually find men falling into the palpable error of ascribing a sensation of evil to a being, which itself has *ceased* to exist, and which therefore is plainly *incapable* of feeling any unhappiness or of suffering any punishment. Deprivation of once enjoyed felicity cannot possibly, in the very nature of things, be a punishment to a mere non-entity.

If then annihilation, from the very circumstance of its *being* annihilation, is absolutely and necessarily *incapable* of being used as a punishment: we may, I think, safely venture to conclude, even *on this account alone*, that it never *could* have formed a part of Adam's penal sentence.

On the whole therefore, I am content to rest in the commonly received opinion, notwithstanding some great names have advocated an opposite system.

pires of the east, or accompany the adventurous navigator of more modern times to the distant shores of the western world : the same religious notions, and the same expiatory ceremonies, will be found universally prevalent. The rude idolater of the recently discovered hemisphere, and the polished votary of ancient polytheism, equally concur in the belief, that without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins. Nor was the life of the brute creation always deemed sufficient to remove the taint of guilt, and to avert the wrath of heaven. The death of a nobler victim was frequently required ; and the altars of Paganism were bedewed with torrents of human blood. The original design of these horrible rites was well known in the secluded groves of Mona ; and the mysterious priesthood of Britain unanimously pronounced, that, unless the pollution of our guilty race was washed away in the life-blood of a man, the anger of the immortal Gods could never be appeased.¹

The universality of sacrificial rites will naturally produce an inquiry into the source, from which a custom, so inexplicable upon any principles of mere natural reason, could have been derived. And here we are almost involuntarily led to consult the inspired history, as being likely to furnish the only satisfactory account of its origin and purport.

¹ See Cooke's Inquiry into the Patriarchal and Druidical Religion, p. 66. and Cæsar. Comment. l. vi. c. 16. For a most ample account of the horrid human sacrifices of the pagans, see Bryant's Observ. and Inq. p. 267—285.

When it pleased the Most High God to reveal his gracious purpose of redeeming lost mankind by the blood of the Messiah, it would doubtless be highly expedient to institute some visible sign, some external representation, by which the mysterious sacrifice of mount Calvary might be prophetically exhibited to all the posterity of Adam. With this view, a pure and immaculate victim, the firstling of the flock, was carefully selected; and, after its blood had been shed, was solemnly appointed to blaze upon the altar of Jehovah. When the first recorded typical sacrifice was offered up, fire miraculously descended from heaven, and consumed it: and, when this primitive ordinance was renewed under the Levitical priesthood, two circumstances are particularly worthy of observation; *that the victim should be a firstling, and that the oblation should be made by the instrumentality of fire.*

It is remarkable, that both these primitive customs have been faithfully preserved in the Heathen world.

The Canaanites caused their first-born to pass through the fire, with a view of appeasing the anger of their false deities; and one of the kings of Moab is said to have offered up his eldest son as a burnt offering, when in danger from the superior prowess of the Edomites.¹ Nor was the belief, that the gods were rendered propitious by this peculiar mode of sacrifice, confined to the nations

¹ 2 Kings iii. 27.

which were more immediately contiguous to the territories of Israel. We learn from Homer, that a whole hecatomb of firstling lambs was no uncommon offering among his countrymen;¹ and the ancient Goths, having *laid it down as a principle, that the effusion of the blood of animals appeased the anger of the gods, and that their justice turned aside upon the victims those strokes which were destined for men,*² soon proceeded to greater lengths, and adopted the horrid practice of devoting human victims. In honour of the mystical number *three*, a number deemed particularly dear to heaven, every ninth month witnessed the groans and dying struggles of nine unfortunate victims. The fatal blow being struck, the lifeless bodies were consumed in the sacred fire, which was kept perpetually burning; while the blood, in singular conformity with the Levitical ordinances, was sprinkled, partly upon the surrounding multitude, partly upon the trees of the hallowed grove, and partly upon the images of their idols.³ Even the remote inhabitants of America retained similar customs, and for similar reasons. It is observed by Acosta, that, in cases of sickness, it was usual for a Peruvian to sacrifice his son to Virachoca, beseeching him to spare his life, and to be satisfied with the blood of his child.⁴

¹ Iliad. lib. iv. ver. 202.

² Mallet's North. Antiq. vol. i. c. 7.

³ Ibid.—Olai Magni Hist. lib. iii. c. 7.

⁴ Acost. apud Purch. Pilgr. book ix. c. 11. p. 383.

Whence then, we may ask, could originate this universal practice of devoting the first-born, either of man or beast, and of offering it up as a burnt-offering? Whence, but from a deep and ancient consciousness of moral depravation? Whence, but from some perverted tradition, respecting the true sacrifice to be once offered for the sins of all mankind? In the oblation of the first-born, originally instituted by God himself, and faithfully adhered to both by Jew and Gentile, we behold the death of him, who was the first-born of his virgin-mother, accurately though obscurely exhibited. And, in the constant use of fire, the invariable scriptural emblem of wrath and jealousy, we view the indignation of that God, who is a consuming fire, averted from our guilty race, and poured out upon the immaculate head of our great Intercessor. Had a consciousness of purity reigned in the bosoms of the ancient idolaters, it does not appear, why they should have had more reason to dread the vengeance of the Deity, than to expect and to claim his favour; yet, that such a dread did universally prevail, is too well known to require the formality of a laboured demonstration.

2. But much stronger, or at least much more direct, testimonies may be adduced, than an inference, however natural, from sacrificial rites. Vestiges of such a doctrine may be distinctly traced in more than a single quarter of the world.

(1.) There is reason to suppose, that the ancient Druids of the Celts expressly taught *the defection of the human soul from a state of original recti-*

tude :¹ and it is asserted to be the invariable belief of the Brahmens of Hindostan, that man is a fallen creature.²

In both these cases, the argument is principally drawn from the severe penitential discipline to which they submitted, with a view of ultimately regaining their lost perfection. The Hindoos however, we are informed, *have an entire Purana on this very subject ; the story is there told in the same manner, as it is related by Moses ; the facts uniformly correspond ; and the consequences are equally tremendous.*³

(2.) A similar opinion is inculcated by the classical mythologists, in the description which they give of man's gradual corruption during the period subsequent to the golden age.

*Dreadfully, says Hesiod, did the second race degenerate from the virtues of the first. They were men of violence and rapine : they had no pleasure in worshipping the immortals : they experienced no delight in offering up to them those sacrifices, which duty required.*⁴

(3.) The doctrine of man's deterioration by the fall, while yet a distant hope was held out to him of recovering his lost privileges, seems likewise to be very plainly alluded to in the well-known legend of Pandora.

¹ Maurice's Ind. Antiq. vol. vi. p. 53.

² Ibid. vol. v. p. 957.

³ Maurice's Hist. of Hind. vol. i. p. 369.

⁴ Hesiod. Oper. et Dier. lib. i. ver. 126.

This highly-gifted female is said to have been formed from clay, synchronically with the similar creation of a man : and she is represented, as being the mother of the first woman who was born in a state of liability to death. At the time of her production, she received presents from all the gods ; and, among the rest, a beautiful casket from Jupiter, which he commanded her to bestow as a nuptial gift upon the man whom she should marry. Fatal curiosity led to the opening of the box : and from it issued forth all those evils, which have ever since afflicted mankind. Hope alone, the hope in a promised and long-remembered Deliverer, remained at the bottom of the casket.¹

(4.) A belief however, that man has lapsed from his pristine uprightness, appears the most strongly in the writings which have issued from the Platonic school : so strongly indeed, as almost to induce the suspicion, that the ancient legends of Paganism have received a warmer colouring from a pencil which had imitated a divine original. At all events, it is certain, that the early philosophers studiously sought the East in pursuit of knowledge, and that the later Platonists had opportunities of borrowing more largely than they might think fit to acknowledge.

The degeneracy of the human soul is alike the standing complaint of the Stoics and the Platonists : but the language, adopted by the Platonists, more

¹ Hyg. Fab. 142. Fulgen. Mythol. lib. ii. c. 9. Hesiod. Oper. et Dier. lib. i. ver. 60—97.

peculiarly and distinctly specifies its lapse from a state of pristine integrity.

These philosophers universally lament, that the soul is enslaved to the body; and that it is here incarcerated by way of punishment for some offence which it had previously committed. The doctrine, when thus modified, involved a belief in the pre-existence of souls; which constituted a prominent feature in the theology of the Gentiles, and which was associated with the tenet of a perpetual succession of similar worlds transmigratively occupied by the same individuals. But this tenet itself sprang from the circumstance of our present mundane system having been preceded by another, to which it bore a very close affinity: and there can be little doubt, I think, that the Platonic notion of sins committed in a preëxisting state originated from the lapse of our first parents, which actually took place during the cycle of a former world.*

Plato's mode of illustrating the aberration of the soul is singularly curious and striking. Originally it resembled a winged chariot, soaring aloft on golden pinions, and passing freely through heaven and earth: but, when for its sins it was thrust down and inclosed within the body, it lost its wings, and remained a prisoner in the flesh under the tyranny of unlawful passions. Hence the incarcerating body may well be deemed the sepulchre of the soul: hence our birth is a death: and hence, conversely, our death, which is in fact

* Orig. of Pagan Idol. book i. c. i. § 1. c. 2.

a liberation of the soul from its corporeal tomb, ought to be esteemed a birth into a new and better state of existence.¹ Agreeably to this opinion, which he professes to have received from certain wise men, he speaks of the bondage of the soul; and laments, as its worst misfortune, that it not only disregarded its captivity, but lent its own assistance to rivet the chain.² He even asserts the doctrine of hereditary sin, which he probably learned from the same quarter. *The cause of our wickedness, says he, is derived from our parents and from the constitution of our nature, rather than from ourselves; so that we never relinquish those actions, by which we imitate the primitive fault of our earliest ancestors.*³

To the same purpose, at a later period, speaks the philosopher Porphyry. *If we cannot do the things which we ought; let us at least, as of old, lament with our fathers, that we are compounded of such warring and opposite principles, that we are unable to preserve the divine spark within us altogether unmixed and untainted.*⁴

Similar language is held likewise by Hierocles. *Most men, he observes, are bad; for, by the violence of their passions, they are bowed down to the earth. But this evil they have brought upon themselves, by their voluntary apostasy from God, and by their withdrawing themselves from that commu-*

¹ Platon. Gorg. p. 493.

² Plat. Phæd. § 33.

³ Plat. Tim. p. 103.

⁴ Porph. de Abst. lib. iii. § 27. p. 138.

man with him which they once in a pure light enjoyed. The reality of such a mental alienation from the Supreme Being is proved by our strong tendency towards the earth: and our sole deliverance from this state of spiritual degradation is our return unto him.'

He also quotes with approbation a saying of Heraclitus, which closely resembles the dogma that Plato acknowledges himself to have received from certain wise men. Speaking of those immaculate spirits who have never lapsed into evil, that philosopher remarks, *that we live their death, and that we die into their life; for man has now descended and fallen from the region of felicity, having become a fugitive, and a wanderer from the presence of the Deity.'*

These opinions are sometimes thrown into the form of an apologue: but the very structure of the apologue may serve to shew, whence the opinions themselves were borrowed. Plato, in his *Symposium*, presents us with the curious tale of Porus and Penia; which Origen naturally enough supposes to be the history of the fall, received from the Alexandrine Jews, and afterwards disguised in the language of enigma. Porus, the god of plenty, had feasted with the rest of the deities, and had become inebriated with nectar. Upon this, he retired into the celestial garden of Jupiter, and there sank into a profound sleep. Here he

¹ Hieroc. in Aur. Carm. p. 261, 262.

² Ibid. p. 253, 254.

was circumvented by a female, denominated *Penia* or *Poverty*: and he was afterwards punished, by his being ejected from the garden.¹ It is almost impossible to doubt, that the prototypes of Porus and *Penia* and the nectar and the garden of Jupiter are Adam and Eve and the forbidden fruit and the garden of Eden.

We meet with a not dissimilar apologue in the commentary of Hierocles: and he has evidently worked it up on the basis of Plato's allegory respecting the deplumation of the soul. According to this writer, there is a meadow of truth and a meadow of destruction. The soul originally was the tenant of the former: but, by the violence of her deplumation, she was precipitated from it; and, being deprived of her original happy estate, she entered into the prison of an earthly body. This figurative deplumation he afterwards styles, in plain terms, a *flight* or *apostasy from God*; states it to be the same as the Platonic descent or lapse of the soul, through some great calamity which she has experienced; and finally intimates, that she can only again soar aloft to the pure region of felicity by casting off all mortal passions and by producing anew the golden pinions of virtue.²

III. The form, assumed by the tempter when he seduced our first parents, has been handed down in the traditions of most ancient nations: and, though animals of the serpent-tribe were very

¹ Orig. cont. Cels. lib. iv. p. 189.

² Hieroc. in Aur. Carm. p. 254, 257, 258.

generally worshipped by the Pagans as symbols of the Agathodemon, they were likewise viewed as types or figures of the evil principle.

1. One of the most remarkable accounts of the primeval tempter under the shape of a serpent occurs in the Zend-Avesta of the ancient Persians.

After the world had been created in the course of five successive periods, man himself is said to have been formed during a sixth. The first of the human species was compounded of a man and a bull; and this mixed being was the commencement of all generations. For some time after his production, there was a season of great innocence and happiness: and the man-bull himself resided in an elevated region, which the Deity had assigned to him. At last, an evil one, denominated *Ahriman*, corrupted the world. After having dared to visit heaven, he descended to the earth, and assumed the form of a serpent. The man-bull was poisoned by his venom, and died in consequence of it. Meanwhile Ahriman threw the whole universe into confusion: for that enemy of good mingled himself with every thing, appeared every where, and sought to do mischief both above and below. His machinations produced a general corruption: and so deeply was the earth and every element tainted by his malignity, that the purifying ablution of a general deluge became necessary to wash out the inveterate stains of evil. Over this operation presided a second man-bull with three associates: and, when the work was accomplished, the sacred

mountain Albordi and afterwards a renovated world emerged from the cleansing waters.¹

2. To the draconian Ahriman of the Persians, the malignant serpent Caliya of Hindoo theology appears to be very closely allied. He is represented at least, as the decided enemy of the mediatorial god ; whom he persecutes with the utmost virulence, though he is finally vanquished by his celestial adversary.²

3. The serpent Typhon of the Egyptians, who is sometimes identified with the ocean because the deluge was esteemed the work of the evil principle ; and the serpent Python of the Greeks, who is evidently the same as the monster Typhon : appear to have similarly originated, in the first instance, from some remembrance of the form which Satan assumed in Paradise. Perhaps also the notion, that Python was oracular ; a notion, which caused the so frequent use of serpents in the rites of divination : may have sprung from a recollection of the vocal responses, which the tempter gave to Eve under the borrowed figure of that reptile.³

4. We may still ascribe to the same source that rebellious serpent, whose treason seems to have been so well remembered among the inhabitants of Syria.

Pherecydes, a native of that country, bestows upon him the Greek name of *Ophioneus* or the

¹ Zend-Avest. in Orig. of Pag. Idol. b. iii. c. 3. § 1.

² Asiat. Res. vol. i. p. 261. Moore's Hind. Panth. p. 23, 198, 201.

³ Anton. Liber. Metam. c. 27.

Serpent god; which, in fact, is a mere translation of the Syriac or Chaldaic *Nachash*. He represents him, as being the prince of those evil spirits, who contended with the Supreme God Cronus, and who in consequence were ejected from heaven. Their happiness being thus justly forfeited, they were henceforth plunged in the depths of Tartarus, hateful and mutually hating each other.²

It is evident, that this story is substantially the same as that of the Persian Ahriman: for, in addition to his poisoning the first-created man, that malignant serpent is said, to have fought against Ormuzd and the fixed stars at the head of the Dives of Mazenderan, to have formed a design of ruining the whole world, and to have been at length defeated by the celestial Izeds and to have been plunged into Douzakh or Tartarus with his rebellious associates.³

From Syria and the east, the legend passed into Greece, mingled however with allusions to the deluge; because, as I have just observed, that great event was esteemed the peculiar work of the evil principle: and Ophion, with his consort Eurynome the daughter of the wide encroaching Ocean, still appears in opposition to Cronus, and is still cast down from heaven into hell.⁴

3. The same evil being, in the same form, appears again in the mythology of the Goths or Scythians.

² Orig. cont. Cels. lib. vi. p. 304.

³ Zend-Avest. in Orig. of Pag. Idol. b. iii. c. 3. § 1.

⁴ Tzet. in Lycoph. ver. 1191. Apoll. Argon. lib. i. ver. 503—507.

We are told by the ancient Scalds, that the bad principle, whom they denominate *Loke*, unites great personal beauty with a malignant and inconstant nature: and he is described, as surpassing all creatures in the depth of his cunning and the artfulness of his perfidy.

Here the pristine glory and majesty of Satan, before the lineaments of celestial beauty were defaced by his rebellious apostasy, seem not obscurely to be alluded to: while the craft and malevolence, which mark his character as a fallen angel, are depicted with sufficient accuracy.

The assumption of the dracontic form by the evil spirit is represented after a mode not unusual among the pagan mythologists: the great serpent is said to have been an emanation from *Loke*; and *Hela* or *Hell* or *Death*, in a poetical vein of allegory not unworthy of our own *Milton*, is celebrated as the daughter of that personage and as the sister of the dragon. Indignant at the pertinacious rebellion of the evil principle, the *Universal Father* dispatched certain of the gods to bring those children to him. When they were come, he threw the serpent down to the bottom of the ocean. But there the monster waxed so large, that he wound himself around the whole globe of the earth. *Death*, meanwhile, was precipitated into hell: where she possesses vast apartments, strongly built, and fenced with grates of iron. Her hall is *Grief*; her table, *Famine*; *Hunger*, her knife; *Delay*, her servant; *Faintness*, her porch; *Sickness and Pain*, her bed; and her tent, *Cursing and Howling*.¹

¹ Edda Fab. xvi.

Here we seem to have the assumption of the serpentine form and the dreadful evils which it introduced into the world, graphically, though allegorically, exhibited. The dragon encompasses the whole earth with his folds: and, being precipitated from heaven, he has for his eternal associates Death and Hell and Misery. *When Lust, whether diabolical or human, hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth Death.*¹

6. From the form assumed by that tempter, who was *himself* precipitated into Hell, a belief very naturally originated, that his infernal companions were distinguished also by the same reptile figure. Hence we meet with an opinion, common alike to the mythologies of Scythia and of Persia and of Hindostan, that the Tartarean house of torment is occupied by monstrous serpents.

(1.) *There is an abode, remote from the sun, says the Author of the Voluspa, the gates of which face the north; an incessant shower of poison streams into it through a thousand openings; and it is entirely composed of the bodies of serpents. Through the midst of it flow dark torrents; in which are plunged the perjured, the assassin, and the seducer. A black-winged dragon flies incessantly around, and devours the bodies of the wretched who are there imprisoned.*²

¹ James i. 15. This text seems to be the germ of Milton's magnificent allegory of Satan and Sin and Death. It is impossible not to be struck with the singular resemblance of the leading idea, which presents itself in the passage from the Edda.

² Mallet's North. Ant. vol. i. p. 116.

(2.) In a similar manner, the Persians supposed the place of torment to be a dark and bottomless pit, full of scorpions and serpents, which gnaw and sting the feet of the damned. Through it flows a dark and fetid stream, black as pitch and cold as snow, in which the souls of the wicked are plunged.*

(3.) The notions of the Hindoos are evidently derived from the same source. In their mythology, *the king of the evil Assoors or demons is called the king of serpents; of which poisonous reptiles, folded together in horrible contortions, their hell or Naraka is formed.*†

IV. Nearly connected with these traditional accounts of the serpent are those of some promised deliverer, some powerful manifestation of deity, who is destined to bruise the head of that poisonous reptile.

1. In the Gothic mythology, Thor is represented as the first-born of the principal divinity; and is exhibited as *a middle deity, a mediator between God and man.*‡ With regard to his actions, he is said to have wrestled with death, and in the struggle to have been brought upon one knee;⁴ to have bruised the head of the great serpent with his mace;⁵ and, in his final engagement with that monster, to beat him to the earth and slay him. The victory however is not obtained but at the expence of his own

* Hyde de Rel. vet. Pers. c. xxxiii.

† Maurice's Hist. of Hind. vol. i. p. 369.

‡ Edda. Fab. xi. Notes.

⁴ Ibid. Fab. xxv.

⁵ Ibid. Fab. xxvii.

life. *Recoiling back nine steps, he falls dead upon the spot, suffocated with the floods of venom which the serpent vomits forth upon him.*¹

2. Much the same notion, we are informed, is prevalent in the mythology of the Hindoos. Two sculptured figures are yet extant in one of their oldest pagodas: the former of which represents Crishna, an incarnation of their mediatorial god Vishnou, trampling on the crushed head of the serpent; while in the latter it is seen, encircling the deity in its folds and biting his heel.²

3. These legends are evidently the same in substance as the classical fable, which I have already noticed, respecting Hercules in the garden of the Hesperides. The god, when elevated to the sphere, was depicted in close contest with the serpent which had been appointed to watch the golden apples: and his attitude is that of trampling with his foot upon the head of the vanquished monster.

4. There is yet another vestige of the expected Saviour in the theology of the Gentiles, which is too remarkable to be passed over in silence.

(1.) Virgil, in his *Pollio*, announces the approaching birth of an extraordinary child, whom he decorates with all the attributes of the Messiah of the Hebrews.

This child was to be the high offspring of the gods, the great seed of Jupiter. He was to introduce an universal peace, and to establish an empire over the whole world. He was to govern with all

¹ Edda. Fab. xxxii.

² Maurice's Hist. of Hind. vol. ii. p. 290.

the virtues of his father, to annihilate violence and injustice, to bring back the life of man to its original innocence and simplicity, and to restore his condition to its primeval happiness. He was to abolish every cause of violent death. He was to kill the serpent, and to purge the vegetable kingdom of its poisons. He was to extend the blessings of his reign even to the brute creation: for the beasts of the forest were to lose their savage nature, so that the ox might graze securely within sight of the lion. He was to bring back, in short, a golden age of pristine virtue and felicity.

(2.) The poet would compliment his friend by anticipating the birth of such a child, either in his family or during his consulship: but still the main question is, whence he derived his expectation that this wonderful infant would *at all* appear. Now he himself intimates, that he derived it from the prophecies of the Cumæan Sibyl: so that the drift of the compliment to Pollio is, that the child; in whom he was interested, would prove that august personage whom the Sibyl had foretold as the deliverer of the world from physical and moral evil.

Disregarding then the idle flattery of the application, we yet have it remaining, that the appearance of a divine child with some such characteristics as those ascribed to it by the poet was actually foretold in the ancient Sibylline oracles. Accordingly we find the existence of such a prophecy to have been well known prior to the birth of our Saviour. When Julius Cesar wished to crown his greatness by assuming the title of a king,

one of his creatures adduced a prediction from the books of the Sibyl, in which it was foretold, that a prince was to arise about that time, whose monarchy should be universal and whose government would be essential to the happiness of the world. This prophecy he applied to his patron : and the inference from such an application was sufficiently obvious. Now, had no such prophecy existed, the opposite party would immediately have exposed the imposture : but, so far from any course like this being taken, Cicero freely admits, that the prophecy in question was actually to be found in the Sibylline oracles ; but maintains that it was not a divinely inspired prediction, because it bore no marks of that phrenzied enthusiasm which the pagan soothsayers were accustomed to affect.

Hence then it follows, that the Gentiles had certain ancient prophecies, which announced a deliverer with attributes precisely similar to those of the Messiah : and a question now arises, from what quarter they procured those prophecies. I am inclined to think with Bp. Horsley, that the genuine Sibylline oracles were fragments of certain original patriarchal vaticinations, which they of the dispersion had carried off with them from Babel ; but this does not appear to me to account for *all* the circumstances of the prediction, to which Virgil refers in his *Pollio* ; and I cannot refrain from thinking, that the learned prelate has been too hasty in supposing that nothing whatsoever has been drawn by the poet from the writings of the Hebrew prophets.

(3.) It is to be observed, that the *primitive* books of the Sibyl, which came into possession of the Romans at a very early period of their empire, were no longer in existence at the time when either Virgil or Julius Cesar flourished; for they had been destroyed by a fire, which broke out in the Capitol, about a century before the Christian era. To remedy this loss, trusty persons were sent by the Senate into Asia, Africa, Sicily, and the Greek islands, for the purpose of making a new collection of Sibylline oracles from the copies or fragments of copies which were thought to be preserved in those regions. The deputies brought back with them about a thousand verses: and the most learned men of Rome were employed to select out of these verses what they deemed the most authentic.

Now the oracles thus procured were those, which contained the prophecy that was attempted to be applied to Julius Cesar, and to which Virgil refers as predicting the manifestation of a wonderful divine infant.

(4.) That these oracles were substantially the same as those which had been destroyed, cannot, I think, be reasonably disputed: because the learned Romans, employed in making the selection, would obviously be persons well acquainted with the contents of the burned volumes; and would therefore, by mere dint of memory, be competent judges of what bore a *general* resemblance to them; but still it may be doubted, whether some interesting particulars were not adopted as authentic, which occurred not in the lost books of the Sibyl.

It appears, that the Romans, for some reason or other, not only expected such a child as was foretold in the oracles, but that they expected him *precisely about the time in which Cesar and Virgil lived*: and it is well known, that, as such an expectation was almost universal at the time of our Saviour's birth, so it had been gradually spreading and gaining strength even before that event. Whence then did this expectation originate? If we suppose the genuine Sibylline oracles, not only to be fragments of ancient patriarchal prophecy, but likewise to have contained an exact specification of the time when the predicted infant should be manifested; we concede to them a degree of fulness, which even the authentic oracles of the Jewish Church long possessed not: for, though *the advent* of the Saviour was foretold before the time of Daniel, yet no *distinct period* was fixed for his manifestation until the prophecy of *the seventy weeks* was delivered. On this ground, I cannot believe that the destroyed book of the Sibyl contained any such prophetic specification. Yet we know, that the expectation in question *did* prevail in the days of Cesar and Virgil: we have therefore to account for its prevalence.

(5.) Now, as Daniel is the only prophet that fixes the precise time when the Messiah should appear, and as his numbers however calculated will bring us to about the time when our Saviour was manifested; it is almost impossible not to be persuaded, that the expectation of some extraordinary infant, which prevailed so generally both for a short time

before and a short time after the birth of Christ, originated either directly or indirectly from the oracle of *the seventy weeks*. Accordingly, with this hypothesis every thing will be found most naturally to agree.

The Sibylline oracles, to which Virgil and the friend of Julius Cesar refer, were confessedly a collection of verses, which had been made about a century before the Christian era from copies existing in Asia, Africa, Sicily, and the Greek islands. But, at this time, the Jews abounded in Egypt and in various parts of western Asia: and the Hebrew Scriptures had been translated into Greek almost two centuries before. Such being the case, it is easy to conceive, that the calculations of the Jews deduced from the numbers of Daniel might be known and borrowed by those pagan priests, who had in their possession fragments of the old Sibylline oracles; and that thus the Roman collection might actually exhibit a declaration, that the predicted infant should appear about the very time that he was accordingly expected.

Nor is this all: since the deputies went out *professedly* to collect such prophecies as they could lay their hands upon, since this was the very *object* of their mission; I cannot deem it improbable, that they should bring home with them all such parts of the writings of Isaiah and Daniel and other Hebrew bards as bore any resemblance to the destroyed Sibylline oracles. For, when the object of their journey was known, it is surely incredible that no one should point out to them the Greek translation

of the ancient Scriptures : and, if they perused this volume, it is equally incredible that they should not avail themselves of it. This will account, not only for the opinion which prevailed among the Romans that the child foretold by the Sibyl was about to appear at the very time when our Lord *did* appear, but likewise for that strong tincture of oriental poetry with which the *Pollio* is so manifestly imbued and in which it bears so close a resemblance to some of the prophecies of Isaiah. Nor yet can I think it at all unlikely, that Virgil himself had perused the poetical parts of the Jewish Scriptures. For this, it was no way necessary, that he should be at the trouble of learning Hebrew from Herod or some one of his attendants during the visit of that prince at Rome (an objection, which has been too hastily urged against the supposition) : he had it in his power to read whatever portion he might think fit of a very ancient and curious book, ready translated to his hand into a language which was quite as fashionable at that period as French is at present. The matter therefore is a question, not of *possibility* but of *probability* : and, on the whole, I am inclined to think it probable, that Virgil *had* read the Greek translation of Isaiah. This great poet was peculiarly addicted to mythological studies, and he industriously takes every opportunity of enriching his writings with perpetual allusions to them. Macrobius accordingly celebrates his extraordinary learning in such points, and adduces more than one instance of it.¹ A man of this turn, we may be

¹ See Macrobius, Saturn. lib. iiii. c. 1—12.

sure, would not neglect any opportunity of increasing his store : and, provided only he had the means, he would examine what he would deem the mythology of the Jews with as much curiosity as Europeans are wont to examine the mythology of the Hindoos. Now, even supposing the Septuagint to have been *previously* unknown at Rome, I see nothing very improbable in conjecturing, that Herod might have brought with him a copy of it, and that thus it might have become known to Virgil. This at least is certain, that, at a somewhat later period, those parts of the sacred volume, which might resemble the prophecies of the Sibyl, were not unknown to the Romans: for Tacitus both expressly asserts, that the appearance of some extraordinary character was expected previous to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus ; and declares, that such an expectation originated (whence, in every instance, I believe it *must* have originated, either mediately or immediately) from the predictions of the Hebrew bards. *Many were persuaded,* says he, *that the era was now arrived, which had been foretold in the ancient books of the priests, when the East should prevail, and when they who came out of Judæa should obtain the sovereignty.*¹

(6.) Perhaps it may be said, that this view of the subject would render it doubtful, whether *any* prophecy of a divine child was contained in the *genuine* Sibylline oracles ; because the prediction, which was adduced by the friend of Cesar, and of

¹ Tacit. Hist. lib. v. § 13.

which Cicero denied not the existence, might have been brought out of Asia or Egypt for the first time by the deputies who were sent by the Senate into those countries about a century before the Christian era.

I readily allow, that the matter is in some measure doubtful: but yet I am not unwilling to believe, that the *genuine* oracles *did* contain some prophecy, more or less distinct, of a divine child; which, with Bp. Horsley, I conceive to have been a fragment of ancient patriarchal lore. My reason is this: When the deputies brought back to Rome the collection which they had made, those Romans, who were best acquainted with the contents of the destroyed oracles, were employed to examine it; in order that what was deemed authentic might be retained, while what was judged spurious might be rejected. Such a scrutiny then being instituted, if the prophecy respecting a divine child had now appeared for the first time in the verses collected by the deputies, and if the examiners had recollected no similar prophecy in the destroyed oracles, they would of course have thrown it out as altogether spurious. But they certainly admitted it; because it existed, as an allowed genuine oracle, in the days of Cicero and Cesar. The presumption therefore is, that some similar prophecy actually occurred in the destroyed copy. What they seem to have added, in short, was *the specification of a particular time when the child should appear*: and this must have been ultimately

derived from Daniel's prophecy of *the seventy weeks*.¹

V. When the innocence of our first parents was forfeited, the evil propensities of a corrupt nature soon began to display themselves. A careless neglect of the divine ordinances on the part of one of the sons of Adam,² and a devout observance of them by the other, procured for Abel a mark of God's favour which was denied to Cain. Jealousy and envy immediately occupied the soul of the rejected sacrificer: hatred and malice followed close behind: and murder, even the murder of a brother, was the result of these baneful and diabolical passions.

1. The history of this event has been preserved with singular accuracy by the Hindoos.

We are told in *one* legend, that the first man Menu-Swayambhuva or Menu-Adima had three daughters and two sons, who were particularly distinguished. In what manner they were distinguished, it does not inform us, except that the deity descended from heaven to be present at a sacrifice which they offered up.³

But the deficiency is amply supplied by *other* legends. From them we learn, that Brahma, becoming incarnate, produced the first woman Satarupa or Iva out of one half of his body, and the first man Swayambhuva or Adima out of the

¹ See Bp. Horsley's Dissert. on the proph. of the Messiah dispersed among the heathen.

² See below. book ii. sect. iii. c. 2. § I. 2.

³ Asiat. Res. vol. ii. p. 116.

other half. This pair had three sons; *Dacsha*, *Cardama*, and *Ruchi*. *Cardama* slew his brother *Dacsha* with a club, as he was performing a sacrifice: but *Dacsha* had previously reviled his antagonist, wishing that he might always remain a vagabond on the face of the earth.¹

2. A somewhat similar story was not unknown to the ancient Atlantians.

They supposed *Uranus* to have been their earliest sovereign; and they described him, as collecting men together into one society, as giving them laws, and as teaching them the arts of gardening and agriculture. He was the parent of *Hyperion* and likewise of various other children. *Hyperion* was a highly pious prince, and espoused his sister *Pandora*: but his brethren, moved with envy, murdered him and usurped the dominions which he had inherited from his father.*

Uranus is here exhibited as the first of men with all the characteristics of *Adam*. But, if *Uranus* be *Adam*; then *Hyperion*, agreeably to the circumstantial part of his history, must necessarily be *Abel*.

3. Perhaps we may trace some vestiges of the same fratricide in a legend of the Greeks respecting the three *Corybantes*.

These were supposed to be brethren; and one of them was thought to have been murdered by the two others. After his death, he was venerated,

* *Asiat. Res.* vol. vi. p. 472—477. vol. viii. p. 254. vol. v. p. 247.

* *Diod. Bibl. lib. iii.* p. 189, 190.

as a god, in the recesses of mount Olympus: and his rites were believed to have been originally instituted by his two guilty brothers.¹

4. It is a remarkable circumstance, that the Iroquois, a savage nation of America, should have accurately preserved a tradition of the event now under consideration.

They believe, that the first woman was seduced from her obedience to God; and that, in consequence of it, she was banished from heaven. She afterwards bore two sons. One of these, having armed himself with an offensive weapon, attacked and slew the other, who was unable to resist his superior force. Many different children afterwards sprang from the same woman, who were the ancestors of all mankind.²

VI. The translation of Enoch is another antediluvian event, the knowledge of which has not been wholly lost among the Gentiles.

1. According to the Hindoos, the third in descent from Adim and Iva was a patriarch named *Dhruwa*. This personage is said to have retired into a forest on the banks of the Jumna, where he devoted himself to the contemplation of the Supreme Being and to the performance of religious austerities. He is commended for his extraordinary piety and for the salutary precepts which he gave to mankind. In reward for his virtue, he did not taste death;

¹ Jul. Firm. de error. prof. rel. p. 23.

² Mœurs des Sauvages. tom. i. p. 43.

but was translated to heaven, where he shines as the polar star.¹

2. A similar legend is introduced into the history of the Cingalese Buddha. When he visited Ceylon for the third time, he ascended to the top of the lofty mountain which by Europeans is generally denominated *the peak of Adam*. From thence he was translated to heaven, and appeared no more in this world.²

3. The worship of Buddha prevails very widely over the Asiatic continent, and he is frequently venerated under the appellation of *Xaca* or *Sakya*. Hence we find the same story told of him by the Calmucs of Siberia. *Among other idols*, says Von Strahlenberg, *they worship in a peculiar manner one, which they call Xaca or Xacamuni. They say, that, four thousand years ago he was only a sovereign prince in India ; but that, on account of his unparalleled sanctity, God had taken him up into heaven alive.*³

4. Of a similar description is the fable of the old Atlantians respecting Hesperus. After the murder of Hyperion which I have already noticed in its proper place, the children of Uranus, among whom Atlas and Saturn were the most celebrated, divided between them the kingdom of their father. Hesperus, the son of Atlas, was eminent above all his

¹ Asiat. Res. vol. v. p. 252.

² Ibid. vol. vii. p. 50.

³ Von Strahlenberg's Siberia. p. 409.

brethren for justice and philanthropy. He was much given to the study of astronomy: and, one day, when he had ascended to the top of mount Atlas for the purpose of observing the motions of the stars, he was suddenly caught up to heaven by a violent wind, and thus disappeared from the eyes of mortals. His contemporaries deified him on account of his piety, and bestowed his name upon the bright star of evening.¹

VII. We are taught in the Pentateuch, that the men, who flourished before the deluge, attained to an age far exceeding that of the present race of mortals; and that the lives even of the early post-diluvians were much longer than our own lives, though the average standard gradually diminished until it had reached the scanty measure which is now allotted to us. This longevity of the ancient patriarchs is mentioned by various pagan authors.

1. Several of them, whose writings have perished, are referred to by Josephus, as corroborating the Mosaical account.

After noticing, on the authority of the Hebrew lawgiver, the great age to which men formerly attained, he adds: *All those persons, whether Greeks or Barbarians, who have written on the subject of antiquity, agree with me in this point. For Manetho who wrote an account of the Egyptians, and Berosus who compiled a narrative of the affairs of Chaldaea, and Mochus, and Hestiëus, and Jerome the Egyptian, who were the authors of different*

¹ Diod. Bibl. lib. iii. p. 193, 194.

*histories of Phenicia ; all these bear testimony to my veracity. Hesiod likewise, and Hecatæus, and Hellanicus, and Acusilaus, and Ephorus, and Nicolaus, relate, that the ancients lived a thousand years.*¹

2. A similar tradition has also been preserved by a Roman poet.

*After Iapetus had brought down fire from the celestial mansions, wasting atrophy and a ghastly brood of fevers hovered over the earth ; and death, though eventually inevitable, yet once far removed, now quickened his footsteps.*²

It is here remarkably asserted, that the life of man began to be shortened in the days of Iapet. Exactly agreeable to this opinion is the scriptural narrative. After the deluge, and at the precise era when Japhet flourished, the longevity of the human race was first curtailed: and henceforward it experienced a gradual diminution, until the present age of man became the average standard.

3. We find much the same belief still prevalent among the Burmans of the further Indian peninsula.

They suppose, that the age of man has not always been the same as what it is at present, and that it will not always continue the same; but that it is lengthened or shortened according to the general merit or demerit of human actions. Agreeably to this theory, they say, that the life of the first man was extended to an almost immeasurable length;

¹ Joseph. Ant. Jud. lib. i. c. 3.

² Hor. Carm. lib. i. Od. 3.

but that his children and grandchildren had gradually and successively shorter lives, in proportion as they became less virtuous. By degrees the term of mortal existence dwindled down to ten years, when a reformation of manners produced a proportionable increase of longevity.¹

It is easy to perceive the origin of such an opinion, however it may in time have been corrupted by fanciful speculatists.

4. The Chinese likewise, according to Couplet, entertain a similar notion respecting the longevity of the patriarchs, who flourished previous to the deluge.

Some of these they suppose to have attained the age of eight or ten thousand years, and some to have even exceeded ten chiliads. Hence the emperor Hoang-Ti, who flourished about seven hundred years after the flood, and who (if we adopt the excellent chronological arrangement of the Samaritan Pentateuch) must have been contemporary with the patriarch Reu when men's lives were not much longer than three centuries; in a medical book of which he was the author, proposes an inquiry into the cause, why the ancients attained to so advanced an age, compared with that of the moderns.²

¹ Asiat. Res. vol. vi. p. 181.

² Couplet Pref. ad Chronol. Sin. p. 5. For remarks on the several postdiluvian systems of the Hebrew, the Samaritan, the Seventy, and Josephus, see my work on the Origin of Pagan Idol. book vi. c. 2. § v. 2, 3, 4, 5. I abide by the system of the Samaritan Pentateuch.

5. It may here be observed, that we cannot, with any degree of consistency, suppose the Mosaiical years to be lunar ones; for in that case, those, who attained to *the greatest* age, will fall considerably short of what many even in our own days have reached. Nor will it be very easy, if the computation be made by years of such a description, to point out the particular period, when that mode of reckoning is to cease. The ages of the Patriarchs are regularly enumerated, even beyond the days of Jacob; and, if lunar years be still used, the absurdity will be evident. In that case, *the old age* of Abraham, when his son was born by a special intervention of heaven, will amount to something more than eight solar years.

VIII. Profane authors seem also to have been well acquainted with the existence of men of a gigantic stature, who flourished at an early period of the world, and who were inured to deeds of rapine and violence.

Thus Sanchoniatho mentions, that from Genos, who has been esteemed the same as the scriptural Cain, were descended sons of vast height and bulk, whose names were given to the mountains on which they first seized: and he speaks of them, as having sprung up during a period of universal corruption and shameless depravity.¹ Thus likewise Hesiod describes the race of men who lived during the brazen age, as fierce, strong, warlike, and insolent: their hearts were of adamant; their

¹ Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. i. c. 10.

corporeal power was immense ; and their nervous arms, firmly knit to their broad shoulders, were irresistible.¹ Thus too Ovid places the giants before the deluge ; and represents them, as being a lawless race, who were stained with blood, and who dared to wage war even with the gods themselves.²

IX. According to Moses, there were ten generations from Adam to Noah, reckoning both inclusive. This circumstance also was not unknown to the Gentiles.

Berosus, Abydenus, and Alexander Polyhistor, all agree in reckoning ten descents from the Chaldean Alorus to Xisuthrus, who was saved in an ark from the waters of a general deluge.³ The Hindoos celebrate ten antediluvian children of Brahma ; and represent them as being succeeded by seven Rishis or Menus, who, with an eighth person the head of their family, escaped in a ship when the whole world was inundated.⁴ They place likewise in the tenth generation from Adima and Ioæ a righteous prince named *Prithu* ; who, like Saturn and Noah, is represented as being a husbandman.⁵ Sometimes again they describe Adima as being the parent of ten sons, among seven of whom he divided the world, three out of

¹ Hesiod. Oper. et Dies. lib. i. ver. 144.

² Ovid. Metam. lib. i. ver. 151.

³ Syncell. Chronog. p. 30, 38, 39.

⁴ Asiat. Res. vol. v. p. 245, 246.

⁵ Ibid. vol. viii. p. 254, 255.

the number having embraced the eremetical life.¹ Here the ten *successive* patriarchs are erroneously made brethren, though the sum total of them is still accurately preserved. The same error, originating however from the same primeval source, occurs also in the mythology of the old Atlantians. According to Plato, the island Atlantis was divided among the ten sons of Neptune, who governed it with joint authority. The first inhabitants of the country were remarkable for their piety: but they afterwards degenerated, and became guilty of all sorts of violence and impurity. At length, as the due punishment of their wickedness, they were overwhelmed, together with their island, by the waves of the ocean.² Atlantis then must clearly be the antediluvian world; and, if so, the ten sons of Neptune, who governed it previous to its submersion, must be the ten antediluvian generations. The opinion is confirmed, both by the gradual deterioration of manners ascribed to its inhabitants, and by an old tradition preserved by Cosmas Indico-Pleustes, that Noah formerly dwelt in it, and that, when it sank, he sailed in an ark to the continent.³

X. These are the principal coincidences, which occur between the sacred and profane accounts of the antediluvian period.

Some are certainly of a nature so remarkable,

¹ Asiat. Res. vol. viii. p. 286.

² See my Dissert. on the Cabiri. vol. ii. chap. 9.

³ Ibid.

that it is impossible to avoid being struck with them; and, if others appear less obvious, they may be omitted without weakening the testimony of the remainder. There will still be a sufficient degree of evidence to prove, that all ancient history, whether it be sacred, or whether it be profane, uniformly relates the very same facts. The sole difference is, that the one, because inspired, is plain, simple, and unadorned; while the other has mingled traditional absurdities with real events, and has thus weakened its own credibility. Scripture serves to explain profane History, and profane History confirms and demonstrates the authenticity of Scripture. Thus even pagan traditions may be made subservient to the cause of truth, religion, and happiness.

CHAP. IV.

PAGAN ACCOUNTS OF THE DELUGE.

It is perfectly agreeable to those notions of retributive justice, which we have early been in the habit of forming, that, while mercy is extended to the humble and the faithful, a continued perseverance in resolute wickedness, and an habitual contempt of God's commandments, should terminate in a signal example of vengeance upon the impenitent. Exactly conformable to this idea is the Scriptural account of the deluge. The old world is said to have gradually arrived at such a pitch of wickedness, that God destroyed it by a supernatural influx of waters. One family alone was excepted, which, on account of its exemplary piety and steady adherence to the cause of religion, was saved from the general calamity.

Now, if this event ever really happened, it is natural to expect that some traces of it will be found in the records of pagan nations, as well as in those of holy Scripture. The magnitude and singularity of the circumstance, if it be indeed agreeable to truth, must have left such an impres-

sion upon the minds of the survivors, as could not easily be eradicated from the traditions of their posterity. For it is scarcely probable, not to say possible, that the knowledge of so great a calamity should be utterly lost to the rest of the world, and should be confined to the documents of the Jewish nation alone. We find however, that this is by no means the case ; a tradition of the deluge, in many respects accurately coinciding with the Mosaiical account of it, has been preserved by most ancient nations.

I. Let us begin with adducing the narrative of the Chusdim or Babylonian Chaldeans : a narrative peculiarly worthy of our attention ; because they were the descendants and successors of those, who were mainly concerned in founding the first great empire after the deluge.

According to their account, a mighty inundation took place in the days of an ancient prince named *Xisuthrus* ; who, like Noah, was the tenth in descent from the protoplast. Warned by a prophetic revelation of the Deity, this person constructed an immense vessel ; and, having sufficiently stored it with provisions of all kinds, he entered into it with his wife, his children, and his friends. Nor was the brute creation forgotten. A sufficient number both of birds and of beasts was directed to be preserved amidst the impending universal destruction. The flood now commenced, and the whole world perished beneath its waters. After it began to abate, *Xisuthrus* sent out some of the birds ; which, finding neither food nor resting

place, returned immediately to the ship. In the course of a few days, he again sent out birds; which returned to him with their feet besmeared with mud. A third time he sent them out, and saw them no more. From this he conjectured, that the waters had now abated from off the face of the earth; and, having made an aperture in the side of the vessel, he perceived himself driving towards a mountain. Here at length disembarking with his wife, his daughter, and his pilot, he adored the Earth, built an altar, and sacrificed to the gods.¹

With regard to this narrative, it is impossible to avoid believing, that it relates to the same event as that which Moses describes. The minute resemblance between the two accounts, in a variety of particulars, precludes all possibility of doubt respecting their identity.

II. Not less remarkable than the Babylonian is the Syrian history of the deluge, as we have it preserved by Lucian.

According to this author, the antediluvians arrived by degrees at such a pitch of wickedness, that they became guilty of every species of injustice. They paid no attention to the obligation of oaths; they were regardless of the rights of hospitality; and they shewed no mercy to their suppliants. The patience of the gods was at length exhausted; and a great calamity befel them. From

¹ Syncel. Chronog. p. 30. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 12. Joseph. Ant. Jud. lib. i. c. 3. § 6.

the vast central abyss the earth poured out an abundance of water ; and the rain descended in torrents from the heavens. The rivers soon overflowed their banks ; and the sea became swollen to so tremendous a degree, that an universal deluge took place, by which all men were destroyed. Deucalion alone, for the sake of his prudence and his piety, was reserved to another generation. In obedience to the commands of heaven, he caused his children and his wives to enter into a capacious ark, which he had constructed for their preservation ; and embarked likewise on board of it himself. Immediately swine, and horses, and lions, and serpents, and all other animals which are bred upon the face of the earth, came to him by pairs ; and he admitted them into the ark. There they lost their savage natures, and became perfectly innoxious ; a change, which took place in them by a special interposition of the Deity. Thus they all sailed together peaceably in one ark, so long as the waters prevailed over the surface of the globe.*

The same Author adds, that he was told at Hierapolis in Syria, that there was a chasm in that country once of considerable dimensions, through which the waters of the flood descended into the great abyss ; and that Deucalion, upon his safe disembarkation, built an altar, and consecrated a temple to Juno over the chasm. This aperture was yet to be seen in his days, though at that time only of small size ; and he describes a ceremony,

* Lucian. de Deâ Syr.

which took place twice every year in memory of the catastrophè of the deluge. Vessels full of water were fetched from the sea by the whole body of the priesthood, assisted by the people of Syria and Arabia; the inhabitants even of the countries beyond the Euphrates attending upon the occasion. After a sufficiency of water had been thus brought, it was poured out upon the floor of the temple: when it was speedily lost in the chasm; which, small as it was, received without difficulty the largest quantity of water. The people supposed, that this ordinance was appointed by Deucalion himself to preserve the memory of that calamity from which he had been delivered.¹

We may here remark, that the appulse of Deucalion is variously related agreeably to the humour of local appropriation, which with national vanity fixed the mountain of the Ark in many different regions. The Syrians, as we have just seen, made him land in the neighbourhood of Hierapolis, most probably on a peak of the Tauric range of mountains: Hyginus supposes Etna in Sicily to have been the place of his debarkation:² Servius represents him, as landing on mount Athos:³ while Ovid and Apollodorus concur in assigning that honour to Parnassus.⁴ In each instance however there is an uniform tradition, that a pious prince and his family were saved in an ark from destruc-

¹ Lucian. de Deâ Syr.

² Hyg. Fab. 152.

³ Serv. in Virg. Eclog. vi. ver. 41.

⁴ Ovid. Metam. lib. i. ver. 317. Apollod. Bibl. lib. i. c. vii. § 2.

tion, when the rest of mankind perished by the waters of a flood.

III. The Magi of Iran, as we are told by Dr. Hyde, equally acknowledged the occurrence of that awful event.

1. He informs us, that the orthodox among the old Persians believed in an universal deluge: though some sects among them denied it entirely; and others maintained, that it was only partial, not extending beyond a mountain situated on the confines of Assyria and Persia. The flood itself they supposed to have burst forth from the oven of an old woman named *Zala-Cupha*, whose house was built in the mountain on which Noah dwelt previous to that calamity.¹

This singular notion of the waters bursting forth from an oven was not peculiar to the Persians. A similar legend is introduced into the Koran: and some pretended, that the oven was that, which had been used by Eve, and which had afterwards been possessed by the successive patriarchs of the Sethite line until at length it devolved to Noah.²

2. But it is in the Zend-Avesta, that we have the most curious Persic account of the deluge; an account given in the genuine style of ancient mythologic fiction, whatever claim to antiquity *the book itself* may possess.³

¹ Hyde de rel. vet. Pers. c. x.

² Koran. c. xi. Sale's Annot. in loc.

³ This question is discussed at large in my *Orig. of Pagan Idols* book iii. c. 3. § 11. The *materials* of the narrative I believe to be genuine, though they may have been worked up

The first-created man, we are informed, was stung to death by Ahriman; who introduced into the world an universal disorder and rebellion. His daring spirit of opposition however was speedily crushed: and the victory remained with the good principle Ormusd. Yet it was thought necessary to bring over the face of the earth a general deluge, that all impurity might be washed away: and a second man, who, like the first, was compounded of a human being and a bull, was the person appointed to effect this great work. He was aided by three associates: and the pure souls watched with care over his safety. During thirty days and thirty nights his light shone on high: and he caused rain to descend for the space of ten days. Every drop of that rain was like a large salver. The earth was wholly covered with water to the height of a man: and all the Kharfesters perished in the inundation, for the waters penetrated into every recess. At length they began to retire, and were again confined within their proper bounds: for a violent wind, during three days, agitated them on all sides upon the earth. Meanwhile God the creator drove back the waters from the Arg of the primeval Magus. Then he caused mount Albordi to appear, and afterwards all the other mountains. These multiplied themselves from the root of Albordi, as suckers are propagated from a tree: and

by a comparatively modern hand: just as the fables, recited in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, were not the invention of Ovid himself, though he was the author of the work.

at last the surface of the whole earth became visible. The world was now renewed, and restored to its pristine shape: for, in the region of mount Albordi, Ormusd planted the germs of those Kharfesters, who remained, and from whom all things were destined to spring. Here another bull was framed, which was the author of general abundance. Two animals likewise of the bovine species were produced, a male and a female: and from them the Universe, comprehending all kinds of animals and birds and fishes, originated.¹

I need scarcely observe on this legend, that the second man-bull with his three companions is Noah with his three sons, that the Arg of the Magus is the Ark of the second great father of mankind, and that mount Albordi is mount Ararat.²

3. It is worthy of observation, that the Persians sometimes describe the patriarch who escaped, by the very same mystic title as that employed both by the Hindoos and the Greeks.

One of the names of the Indian Menu is *Cala* or *Time*: *Cronus*, the Greek appellation of Saturn, has a manifest affinity with *Chronus* which also signifies *Time*: and Sir William Jones was assured by a learned follower of Zeradusht, that in the books, which the Behdins hold sacred, mention is made of an universal flood styled *the deluge of Time*.³

¹ Zendavesta. vol. iii. p. 348—363.

² The reader will find a more ample elucidation of the present history in my *Orig. of Pagan Idol.* book iii.

³ Macrob. Saturn. lib. i. c. 22. p. 214. *Asiat. Res.* vol. i. p. 240.

IV. From the Persic traditions, let us pass on to that very minute and remarkable history of the deluge, which has been preserved by the Brahmens of Hindostan.

This narrative is contained in the ancient poem of the Bhagavat : and it treats of a flood, which destroyed all mankind, except a pious prince with seven of his attendants and their wives. To transcribe the whole narrative would be superfluous, as it is replete with fabulous corruptions and additions ; but that part of it, which is more immediately applicable to the present purpose, is as follows.

The demon Hayagriva having purloined the Vedas from the custody of Brahma, while he was reposing at the close of the sixth Manwantara ; the whole race of men became corrupt, except the seven Rishis and Satyavrata, who then reigned in Dravira, a maritime region to the south of Carnata. This prince was performing his ablutions in the river Critamala, when Vishnou appeared to him in the shape of a small fish ; and, after several augmentations of bulk in different waters, was placed by Satyavrata in the ocean, where he thus addressed his amazed votary. In seven days, all creatures, who have offended me, shall be destroyed by a deluge ; but thou shalt be secured in a capacious vessel miraculously formed. Take therefore all kinds of medicinal herbs and esculent grain for food ; and, together with the seven holy men, your respective wives, and pairs of all animals, enter the ark without fear. Then shalt thou know God face

to face ; and all thy questions shall be answered. Saying this, he disappeared : and, after seven days, the ocean began to overflow the coasts, and the earth to be flooded by constant showers ; when Satyavrata, meditating on the Deity, saw a large vessel moving on the waters. He entered it, having in all respects conformed to the instructions of Vishnou ; who, in the form of a vast fish, suffered the vessel to be tied with a great sea-serpent, as with a cable, to his measureless horn. When the deluge had ceased, Vishnou slew the demon and recovered the Vedas, instructed Satyavrata in divine knowledge, and appointed him the seventh Menu by the name of Vaivaswata.¹

V. In pursuing the present inquiry, our attention is next called to the great empire of China. Here also we shall find a tradition of the deluge, though perhaps not quite so clear and decisive as those which have been already considered.

1. Martinius informs us, that the Chinese writers make frequent mention of the flood, but that they do not enter into the causes which produced it. This deficiency led that author to doubt whether they spoke of the Noëtic flood or of some partial deluge confined to the realm of China. So far as this however he ventures to assert, that there is no great dissimilitude between the two accounts : and he adds, that in point of chronology they near-

¹ Asiat. Res. vol. ii. p. 117. A print of the Fish-Avatar of Vishnou may be seen in Maurice's Hist. of Hind, vol. i. p. 507.

ly coincide, each having taken place about three thousand years before the Christian era.¹

2. Such is the direct history of the deluge, which the Chinese possess: but they have likewise various legends, which seem to refer to it indirectly.

Their authors, we are told, frequently speak of two heavens, the latter of which in point of time succeeded the former. From the description which they give of them, the first very evidently alludes to the antediluvian world commencing with a state of innocence, and the second to the postdiluvian world which was immediately preceded by an universal deluge.

Whilst the first state of heaven lasted, say their sacred books, a pure pleasure and a perfect tranquillity reigned over all nature. There was neither labour, nor pain, nor sorrow, nor criminality. Nothing made opposition to the will of man; the whole creation enjoyed a state of happiness; every thing was beautiful, every thing was good; all beings were perfect in their kind. In this happy age, heaven and earth employed their virtues jointly, to embellish nature. There was no jarring in the elements, no inclemency in the air; all things grew without labour; and universal fertility prevailed. The active and passive virtues conspired

¹ Martin. Hist. Sin. lib. i. p. 12. In mentioning this term of years, Martinius follows very judiciously the longer computation which has been adopted by the eastern churches. According to the Hebrew chronology, the deluge occurred in the year 2349 A. Æ. C.; according to the Samaritan, in the year A. Æ. C. 2939.

together, without any effort or opposition, to produce and perfect the universe. In this state of the first heaven, man was united inwardly to the supreme Reason ; and outwardly he practised all the works of justice. The heart rejoiced in truth, and there was no mixture of falsehood. The four seasons of the year succeeded each other regularly and without confusion. There were no impetuous winds, nor excessive rains. The sun and the moon, without ever being clouded, furnished a light purer and brighter than at present. The five planets kept on their course without any inequality. There was nothing which did harm to man, or which suffered any hurt from him ; but an universal amity and harmony reigned over all nature.'

In this description, the Chinese manifestly allude to a state of pristine innocence : and their established doctrine on that point exactly harmonizes with those notions of a golden age, which have been so familiar to the bulk of mankind.

On the other hand, the account, which they give of the commencement of the second heaven, seems clearly to point out the dreadful convulsion, which the world underwent at the time of the deluge.

The pillars of heaven were broken. The earth shook to its very foundations. The heavens sunk lower towards the north. The sun, the moon, and the stars, changed their motions. The earth fell to pieces ; and the waters inclosed within its bosom burst forth with violence, and overflowed it. Man

^{*} Chev. Ramsay on the Mythology of the Pagans. p. 266.

having rebelled against heaven, the system of the universe was totally disordered. The sun was eclipsed, the planets altered their course, and the grand harmony of nature was disturbed.¹

3. It may likewise be observed, that the moral cause of the deluge is assigned by the Chinese in a very striking manner.

All these evils arose, says the book Liki, from man's despising the supreme monarch of the universe. He would needs dispute about truth and falsehood; and these disputes banished the eternal reason. He then fixed his looks on terrestrial objects, and loved them to excess: hence arose the passions. He became gradually transformed into the objects which he loved; and the celestial reason entirely abandoned him. Such was the source of all crimes; and hence originated those various miseries, which are justly sent by heaven as the punishment of wickedness.²

VI. Not less interesting is the account, which the Burmans give of the deluge: though it is interwoven with the favourite pagan doctrine of a succession of numerous similar worlds; each of which either has been, or will be, destroyed in consequence of the wickedness of its inhabitants.

Their writings allege three remote causes for the destruction of a world; luxury, anger, and ignorance. From these, by the power of fate, arise the physical or proximate causes; fire, water, and

¹ Chev. Ramsay on the Mythology of the Pagans. p. 267.

² Ibid. p. 267.

wind. *When luxury prevails, the world is consumed by fire ; when anger prevails, it is dissolved in water ; when ignorance prevails, it is dispersed by wind. A thousand years before the destruction of a world, a certain Nat descends from the superior abodes. His hair is dishevelled ; his countenance is mournful ; and his garments are black. He passes every where through the public ways and streets with piteous voice, announcing to mankind the approaching dissolution. When water is to destroy the world, at first there fall very gentle showers ; which, by degrees increasing, become at length of a most prodigious magnitude. By such rain the abodes of men are entirely dissolved : and, after the greater part have perished, another heavy rain falls, and sweeps away into the rivers the unburied bodies. Then follows a shower of flowers and sandal-wood to purify the earth : and all kinds of garments fall from above. The scanty remains of men, who had escaped from destruction, now creep out from caverns and hiding-places ; and, repenting of their sins, henceforth enjoy longer lives.*

▷ In the midst of various impertinent additions, we may here distinctly observe the history of an universal deluge, preceded by an eminent preacher of righteousness, who vainly warns an irreclaimable race to put away their iniquities.

VII. The same tradition of a general flood prevailed also among the ancient Goths.

* Asiat. Res. vol. vi. p. 174—244.

According to their legends as we have them preserved in the Edda, all the families of the giants were once drowned in the streams of blood which flowed from the mundane body of Ymer. A single person however with his household was saved from the universal devastation, by taking refuge in his ship : and from him descended the succeeding race of giants.¹

VIII. Equally is a belief, in the occurrence of an universal deluge, proved by the traditions of the Egyptians.

The priest, who conversed with Plato on the subject, after discussing a destruction of the earth by fire, next proceeded to discourse of its dissolution by a mighty flood. *The gods, said he, now wishing to purify the earth by water, overwhelmed it with a deluge. On this occasion, certain herdsmen and shepherds were saved on the tops of the mountains : but they, who dwelt in the towns which are situated in our country, were swept away into the sea by the rising of the rivers.*²

IX. Of a similar origin are such Druidical legends, as have been preserved to us in the writings of the bards. The sum of them, we are told, is briefly as follows.

The profligacy of mankind had provoked the Great Supreme to send a pestilential wind upon the earth. A pure poison descended : every blast was death. At this time the Patriarch, distinguished for his integrity, was shut up, together with his

¹ Edda. Fab. 4.

² Platon. Tim. fol. 22, 23.

select company, in the inclosure with the strong door. Here the just ones were safe from injury. Presently a tempest of fire arose. It split the earth asunder to the great deep. The lake Llion burst its bounds: the waves of the sea lifted themselves on high round the borders of Britain. The rain poured down from heaven: and the water covered the earth. But that water was intended as a lustration, to purify the polluted globe, to render it meet for the renewal of life, and to wash away the contagion of its former inhabitants into the chasms of the abyss. The flood, which swept away from the surface of the earth the expiring remains of the patriarch's contemporaries, raised his vessel on high from the ground, bore it safe upon the summit of the waves, and proved to him and his associates the water of life and renovation.¹

X. Having now surveyed the traditions of the old continent, let us next consider those of America.

1. There is still extant a Mexican painting; which, from an ignorance of alphabetic writing, served to exhibit the history of the deluge, as received by the Aztuk tribes.

This picture represents Coxcox or Tezpi, in the midst of the waters, recumbent in his bark. The mountain, which rises above the waves crowned with a tree, is the peak of Colhuacan, the Ararat of the Mexicans. At the foot of it appear the heads of Coxcox and his wife Xochiquetzal, who was saved along with him.

¹ Davies's Mythol. of the Brit. Druids. p. 226.

The literal history, attached to the painting, is as follows. When a mighty deluge overwhelmed the whole earth, Tezpi embarked in a spacious vessel with his wife, his children, a variety of different animals, and a sufficiency of grain ; that so the future inhabitants of a new world might not be left destitute of what was essentially necessary to them. In this manner, his privileged family sailed without danger over the great deep ; while every thing else perished beneath the waves. At length the great Spirit Tezcatlipoca ordered the waters to withdraw : and Tezpi then sent out from his bark a vulture, that he might ascertain the condition of the earth. This bird however, which feeds on dead flesh, did not return, on account of the numerous carcasses which the retiring flood had left behind it. Tezpi therefore sent out other birds : and of these, the humming bird, alone returned, holding in its beak a branch covered with leaves. Perceiving from this circumstance, that the waters had now retired, and that fresh verdure had begun to clothe the soil, he quitted his bark near the mountain of Colhuacan.¹

Some doubts have been thrown upon the authenticity of the present tradition, as if it were the mere fabrication of the Spanish monks : but I cannot perceive, that there is any sufficient reason for so grave a charge against those ecclesiastics. The belief in an universal deluge and in the preservation of a single family from the general destruction is, in fact, no way peculiar to the Mexicans : nor is

¹ Humboldt's Research. vol. ii. p. 64, 65.

their account of it at all more accurate than that of many other pagan nations. Hence I can discern no very strong grounds for a scepticism, which is built only upon the alleged exactness with which an universally remembered fact has been preserved in the records of Mexico. The inhabitants of America seem clearly to have brought both their traditions and their theology from Asia by the easy passage of Behring's Straits: and, if the outlines of the latter were faithfully preserved, there is no great probability that the former should be forgotten.

2. A somewhat similar account of a general inundation was prevalent also, as we are informed by Gomara, among the Peruvians.

They believed, by old tradition from their ancestors, that it once rained so violently, as to deluge all the lower parts of the country. In consequence of this, an universal destruction of the human species took place, a few persons only excepted, who escaped into caves situated on the tops of the mountains. Into these elevated retirements they had previously conveyed a sufficient stock of provisions and a number of living animals; lest, when the waters abated, the whole race should have become extinct. As soon as the rain ceased, they sent out two dogs; which returned to them besmeared with mud and slime. Hence they concluded, that the flood had not yet subsided. After a certain interval, they sent out more dogs; which, coming back dry, convinced them that the earth was now habitable. Upon this, they left the places

into which they had retired, and became the progenitors of the present race of men. The number of persons, whom the Peruvians suppose to have been thus saved, nearly approaches to that mentioned in the Mosaical account. It consists of seven: a number, which very frequently occurs in the diluvian legends of the Gentiles, and which seems to be made up of the Noëtic family exclusive of the wife of Noah. The reason, why she was so often excluded, was this. Viewed as the great universal mother, she was mystically identified with the Ark itself; and, as the goddess of the ship, she was still esteemed the consort of the great father and the parent of his children.¹

3. We are told likewise, that the Brazilians were found to have preserved a similar traditional account of the deluge.

At the period of that great catastrophè, they supposed all mankind to have perished, save a man and his sister, who escaped on a Janipata or raft. From this pair the Brazilians deduce their origin.

Lerius relates, that he was present at one of their assemblies, when, in a solemn chorus, they chanted a kind of requiem to the souls of their ancestors. In the course of the song, they did not fail to notice the catastrophè of the deluge; in which the whole world perished, except some of their progenitors, who escaped by climbing into high trees.²

¹ Purch. Pilgrim. book ix. c. 10, 8. See my Orig. of Pagan Idol. book v. c. 3.

² Ibid. book ix. c. 5.

4. The same tradition is said to have equally prevailed in Nicaragua.

We learn from Peter Martyr, that, when the Spaniards first discovered that country, they attempted to persuade the prince of it to become a Christian. Upon this, he immediately inquired, whether those, who professed the religion of Jesus, had any knowledge of the flood; which, according to traditional accounts received from his predecessors, had once covered the whole earth, and had destroyed both men and beasts.¹

5. Nor is this awful instance of divine justice altogether unknown to the inhabitants of those islands, which are scattered over the great Pacific ocean.

(1.) The natives of Otaheite, we are told, have a tradition, that the gods in their anger formerly broke the whole world in pieces: whence they contend, that all the islands around them are but fragments of what was once the great land, and that their own is the most eminent part of it.²

(2.) It is difficult to say, what such a legend can allude to, if not to the deluge: but the tradition, which prevails in the Sandwich islands, requires no gloss or explanation; it is perfectly distinct and unambiguous. The inhabitants of this cluster believe, that their principal deity Etooh created the world; but that he afterwards destroyed it by an inundation, which covered the whole earth except

¹ Purch. Pilgr. book viii. c. 14.

² Mission, Voyage to the South Pacif. Ocean. p. 344.

the peak of Mowna Roa. On the top of that mountain a single pair saved themselves from destruction: and these were the parents of the present race of mortals.¹

XI. Moses informs us, that the Ark rested on the summit of mount Ararat: and it seems to have been a very general opinion in all ages, that that mountain was situated in the high land of Armenia.

1: Various are the pagan authors, who concur in this supposition.

The deluge and the Ark, says Josephus, are noticed by all those persons, who have written barbaric histories. According to Berosus the Chaldæan, it is reported, that part of the ship is even yet remaining in Armenia on a mountain of the Cordyæans; and that it is a custom to scrape from off it some of the bitumen, with which it was covered, and to carry it about the person as a talisman to avert disorders. Jerome likewise the Egyptian who wrote the ancient history of Phenicia, and Mnaseas, and many others, make mention of these events. Such also is the account given by Nicolaus of Damascus in his ninety-sixth book. There is a great mountain, he observes, in Armenia, situated above Minyas, which is called Baris. A report prevails, that, at the time of the deluge, many persons fled here and were preserved. One, in particular, was conveyed in an ark to the very summit of the mountain, and a considerable part of that

¹ Quarterly Review. numb. xxxi. p. 80.

*vessel yet remains. He perhaps may be the man celebrated by Moses the Jewish lawgiver.*¹

Abydenus also, after describing the flood from which the Chaldæan Xisuthrus was saved, concludes with asserting, that the Ark first rested on the mountains of Armenia, and that the remains of its timber were still used by the inhabitants of the country to suspend round their necks as a talisman.²

In a similar manner, we are told by Melo, that the person, who was saved along with his sons from the waters of the deluge, was afterwards driven away by the natives from Armenia ; upon which he retired into the mountains of Syria.³

2. To the same purpose speak likewise some of the Christian fathers.

Thus Epiphanius relates, that, in the high land of Armenia called *the Gordyæan hills*, one mountain in particular, loftier than the rest, bore in his days the name of *Lubar* ; which, in the language of the country, signified *the descending place*.⁴ Thus Theophilus asserts, that fragments of the Ark were still to be seen on the mountains of Aram or Armenia.⁵ And thus Chrysostom appeals to the circumstance, as a thing well known and generally allowed : *Do not*, says he, *those mountains of Ar-*

¹ Joseph. Ant. Jud. lib. i. c. 3. § 6. Zonar. Annal. vol. i. p. 19.

² Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 12.

³ Ibid. lib. ix. c. 19.

⁴ Epiph. adv. Hær. lib. i

⁵ Theoph. ad Autol. lib. iii. p. 391.

*menia bear witness to the truth, those mountains where the Ark first rested ; and are not the remains of it preserved there even until this day ?*¹ It is not improbable, that such relics might then be *shewn* ; though, like the multiplied fragments of the true cross, they might be able to prefer no very strong claims to *authenticity*. The circumstance however of their being shewn proves at least the existence of a prevailing belief, that the Ark grounded in that region.

3. As the ancient Armenians seem to have had a standing tradition, that the Noëtic family landed in their country ; so we are informed by travellers, that the modern ones still preserve the same opinion.

According to Cartwright, at the foot of the supposed mountain of the Ark is situated a convent of Gregorian monks ; who pretend, that some portion of that vessel is yet in being, though angels prevent any person from obtaining a sight of it. The foundations of many buildings continue to be visible upon the summit of the peak ; which are supposed by the natives to have been erected in that situation by the first inhabitants of the postdiluvian world, from a fear, if they ventured lower down, of experiencing a calamity similar to that from which their immediate ancestors had so recently escaped.²

William de Rubruquis, who travelled into Tar-

¹ Chrysost. de perfect. char. vol. vi. p. 748.

² Purchas. Pilgr. book i. c. 8. The same story is told by Chardin. Voyage. p. 314.

tary in the year 1253 and returned by Armenia, has a curious passage to the same purpose. *Near the city Naruan*, says he, *there are mountains called Masis, upon which they say that the Ark of Noah rested. There are two of these mountains, the one greater than the other ; and the Araxes runs at the foot of them. There is also a little town Cemainum, which is by interpretation Eight : for they say, it was so called from the eight persons, who came out of the Ark and built it. This is plain from the name ; for Cemainum signifies Eight. They call the mountain The mother of the world.*¹

Some of the natives imagine, that the true resting-place of the Ark is to be sought for in that chain of hills, which branches out to the eastward of Armenia, and which is one of those ridges that the Greeks corruptly expressed *Taurus*. A range of it in the province of Adarbayn is still denominated *Al Baris*, the very name of the more western Armenian mountain to which the appulse of the Ark is likewise ascribed. Sir Thomas Herbert travelled there in the year 1626 : and he mentions one remarkably high peak near the city Tauris called *Da-Moan* ; on which, it was positively asserted from tradition, that the Ark had rested.²

What the Greeks wrote *Taurus* and *Tauris*, as if the word were a derivation from their own language, the Armenians expressed, and still continue to express, *Tebris* or *Tabris* or (to mark it as a compound) *Ta-Baris*. Now, in the Scuthic dialect

¹ Rubruquis apud Purch. vol. iii. p. 50.

² Herbert's Travels. p. 197, 201.

of the country, *Ta* signifies a *place*, while *Baris* denotes a *ship*: and, in this sense, the latter of these words was used both by the Greeks, the Celts, and the Egyptians. *Mount Baris* therefore, mentioned by Nicolaus of Damascus, is equivalent to *the mount of the ship*: and *Ta-Baris* or *Tabris* will, in a similar manner, denote *the place of the ship*.

The account given of these countries by Chardin, who travelled between the years 1665 and 1669, corresponds very accurately with the narratives of Cartwright, Rubruquis, and Herbert. He found one of the Armenian hills still called *Cou-Nouh*; which, as he rightly informs us, signifies in the Persic *the mountain of Noah*. Here that patriarch was supposed to have landed from the Ark: and the tradition of the country ascribed to him the founding of the city, which Rubruquis writes *Naxuan* and which Chardin expresses *Nacshivan*. It was thought to have been his dwelling-place after the flood: but, when Chardin travelled, it was only a vast heap of ruins. Westward of it is that other mountain, where the Ark is likewise thought to have grounded. Chardin agrees with Rubruquis and Cartwright in terming it *Masis* or (as he spells the word) *Macis*.¹

So great is the veneration of the Armenians for mount Masis, that, as soon as they can see it (and it is so lofty that it can be seen at the distance of ten days journey), they kiss the earth, and repeat

¹ Voyage du Chev. Chardin. p. 313, 344—360.

certain prayers, making the sign of the cross. They verily believe, that the Ark rested on its summit. The old patriarch of Armenia, who resided at Erivan about two days journey from the mountain northward, when applied to for guides thither by Tournefort and his company, told them, that *God had never yet favoured any one with a sight of the Ark, except only one saint of their order, who, after fifty years spent in fasting and prayer, was miraculously carried thither, but was so seized by the excessive cold that he died at his return.*¹

XII. When Noah wished to learn, whether the waters had sufficiently abated to allow him to quit the Ark, he sent out a dove; and, from its return to him or its stay, he judged respecting the condition of the earth's surface. Many traces of this portion of history may be observed in the legends of the Gentiles, among whom the dove was very commonly reckoned a peculiarly sacred bird.

1. Plutarch, in his treatise on the sagacity of animals, says, that *a dove was sent by Deucalion out of the ark; which, when it returned to him, shewed that the storm was not yet abated: but that, when he saw it no more, he concluded that the sky was become serene again.*²

With a similar reference to the deluge, the Sicilian medals of Janus, who seems evidently to have been a copy of the scriptural Noah, had on one side the double countenance of the deity, and on

¹ Tournefort's Voyage to the Levant, vol. iii. p. 183. Hales's Chronol. vol. i. p. 339.

² Plut. de solert. animal. p. 968.

the reverse a dove bearing a branch in its mouth.¹

So likewise the Indian mythologists teach, that, during the time of the flood, their principal goddess and god assumed the forms of the ship *Argha* and its mast; that, thus metamorphosed, they were wafted in safety over the great deep; and that, when the waters abated, they flew away in the shape of two doves.²

The Indian ship *Argha* is certainly the same as the mystic ship of the Egyptian Osiris, which was called *Argo* and *Theba* and *Baris*, and within which the god was annually set afloat on the surface of the holy river Nile.³ From Egypt the rites of the *Argo* were brought into Greece; for we are told, that Danaus or the captain of the *Danai* sailed in this identical vessel from the one country to the other.⁴ The Hellenic writers worked up its primeval history into a romance, and celebrated an imaginary voyage of Jason in the same ship *Argo* from Pagasæ to Colchis. The origination however of this romance is sufficiently evident; for we are informed, that, during the course of the voyage, the mariners sent out an exploratory dove, and acted agreeably to the observations which they made upon its flight.⁵

We may trace a similar allusion to the events of the deluge in the Greek story of Anias. This

¹ Bryant's Anal. vol. ii. p. 260.

² Asiat. Res. vol. vi. p. 523.

³ Plut. de Isid. p. 359.

⁴ Schol. in Apoll. Argon. lib. i. ver. 4.

⁵ Apoll. Argon. lib. ii. ver. 551—605.

personage, with his allegorical mother Rheo, is said to have been inclosed during his infancy within an ark, and to have been thus committed to the sea. He came however safe to land; and his daughters were afterwards metamorphosed into doves.¹

2. The Indian goddess, who assumes the form of the ship Argha, and who at the close of the deluge flies away in the shape of a dove, is clearly the same mythological character as the Isis of Egypt, as the Derceto of Syria, and as the Venus of the West.² Hence we find the dove immediately connected with these divinities also.

Thus Isis was sometimes depicted with a triple dove on her head.³ Thus Derceto is feigned to have been born out of a floating egg, on the exterior of which perched a dove: ⁴ her daughter Semiramis was thought to have been finally changed into a dove: ⁵ and there was a female image in her temple at Hierapolis, which bore a golden dove upon its head.⁶ Thus again the western Venus is usually represented, emerging from the sea, attended by her favourite dove, and encompassed by dolphins.

This last goddess had a famous temple on mount

¹ Tzet. in Lycoph. ver. 570. Lycoph. Cassan. ver. 580. Tzet. in loc. Ovid. Metam. lib. xiii. ver. 674.

² See Origin of Pagan Idol. book v. c. 1.

³ Bryant's Anal. vol. ii. plate V.

⁴ Hyg. Fab. 197. Ampel. c. 2.

⁵ Ovid. Metam. lib. iv. ver. 44. Lucian. de dea Syr. vol. ii. p. 885. Diod. Bibl. lib. ii. p. 93, 107.

⁶ Lucian. de dea Syr. vol. ii. p. 903.

Eryx in Sicily, where she was venerated with some very extraordinary rites. During two days in each year were celebrated the festivals of the Anagogia and the Catagogia; on the first of which Venus was supposed to depart over the sea, and on the second to return to her temple. In the course of the festivals, sacred doves were let loose: but one of them, which no doubt had been duly trained for the purpose, was always observed to return from the sea on the day of the Catagogia, and to fly to the temple of the goddess.¹ The whole related to the history of the deluge: mount Eryx was the local Ararat of the country; Venus was the female genius of the ship; and the actions of her doves represented the similar actions of Noah's dove. In short, the character of the great goddess of Paganism, by whatever name she might be worshipped, is abundantly manifest from the particulars which have come down to us.

It is worthy of observation, that the Syrian Derceto and the Egyptian Isis were each deemed the receptacle of the hero-gods; who were eight in number, and who were depicted not standing on dry ground but sailing together in a ship.² Would we know what was meant by this receptacle, we need only advert to the story of the Indian goddess; who, at the time of the deluge, assumed the form

¹ Athen. Deipnos. lib. ix. p. 395. Ælian. Var. Hist. lib. i. c. 15.

² Simplic. in Arist. de Ausc. Phys. lib. iv. p. 150. Plut. de Isid. p. 374. Herod. Hist. lib. ii. c. 145. Porph. de antr. nymph. p. 256.

of a ship, and thus became the receptacle of her mystic consort.¹

3. As the Hindoos pretend that the ark of Satyavrata came to land in the high country at the head of the Ganges, so they still preserve a most vivid tradition of his dove.

The summit of Chaisa-ghar is always covered with snow ; in the midst of which are seen several streaks of a reddish colour, supposed by pilgrims to be the mark or impression made by the feet of the dove which was let out of the ark. For it is the uniform and general tradition of that country, that Satyavrata built the ark on the summit of this mountain, and there embarked ; that, when the flood assuaged, the summit of it first appeared above the waters ; and that it was the resting-place of the dove, which left the impression of her feet in the mud by time hardened into a rock. The ark itself rested about half way up the mountain, on a projecting plain of a very small extent. With respect to the footsteps of the dove, they are known only by tradition ; for the inhabitants of that country assert, that they have never heard of any body going up so high on account of the snow and the ruggedness of the mountain. This place is resorted to by pilgrims from all parts of India, who scramble up among the rocks to a cavern beyond which they never go. A few doves, frightened with the noise, fly from rock to rock. These the pilgrims fancy to be their guides to the holy place ; and be-

¹ See my Orig. of Pagan Idol. book v. c. 3.

lieve, that they are the genuine offspring of the dove which was let out of the ark.¹

4. But perhaps one of the most signal attestations to the truth of the Mosaical history is a coin struck at Apamea in the reign of Philip the elder.

On the reverse of this medal is represented a kind of square chest floating upon the waters. A man and a woman are advancing out of it to dry land, while two other persons remain within. Above it flutters a dove, bearing an olive-branch: and another bird, possibly a raven, is perched upon its roof. In one of the pannels of the chest is the word *Noë* in Greek characters.²

XIII. The number of persons saved in the Ark amounted to eight: and, as the early patriarchs were the demon-gods of the Gentiles, the recollection of this celebrated ogdoad has been duly preserved in several of their mythological systems.

The primeval great gods of Egypt were precisely eight: and their character sufficiently appears from the circumstance of their being represented sailing together over the ocean in a ship.³ The Indian Siva and his consort Parvati, who assumed during the period of the deluge the forms of a ship and its mast, are each said to have been conspicuously manifested in eight forms, which forms were mutually the same with one another, on the top of that mountain where the Brahmens fix the appulse of

¹ *Asiat. Res.* vol. vi. p. 521—524.

² *Bryant's Anal.* vol. ii. 230.

³ *Herod. Hist. lib. ii. c. 145.* *Porph. de antr. nymph.* p. 256.

the Ark.¹ The same story, divested of its mysticism, is told in their literal account of the flood; for the number of holy persons, who entered with Satyavrata into the ship, is expressly said to have been seven. In the Phenician mythology, the seven Cabiri are described as the sons of Sydyk or the Just Man: and these eight persons are reported to have been the builders of the first ship, and at the close of some remarkable voyage to have consecrated to the sea-god the relics of the ocean.² The same Cabiric gods are enumerated with some variation, but in a yet more accurate manner, by Pherecydes. He tells us, that the great artizan Vulcan, who was thought to exercise his craft in a wonderful floating island, and who is certainly Noah viewed as the framer of the Ark, espoused Cabira or the maritime Venus, and by her became the father of the three Cabiri and the three Cabiræ.³ This ogdoad is the same as the classical ogdoad of Saturn and Rhea, viewed as the parents of three sons united to their three kinswomen. Hence we are informed, that Saturn once constructed a cavern in the midst of the ocean, where he concealed his family during a time of imminent danger: and hence we find, that the number *eight* was consecrated in a peculiar manner to Rhea.⁴ From the

¹ Asiatic Res. vol. i. p. 253, 248. Moor's Hind. Panth. p. 12, 105, 58, 64.

² Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. i. c. 10.

³ Strab. Geog. lib. x. p. 472. Apoll. Argon. lib. iii. ver. 42.

⁴ Porph. de antr. nymph. p. 254. Damas. in annot. ad Phurn. Theor. sect. vi.

same source Xenocrates appears to have derived his eight principal deities, whom he supposed to be the regents of the eight heavenly bodies.¹ This notion originated from the belief, that the souls of the hero-gods were after death translated to the sphere. Accordingly we learn from Martianus Capella, that the whole solar system was mystically esteemed an immense ship, manned by the seven planetary brethren, and steered by the Sun who acts as pilot.² With a similar reference to the arkite navigators, the hieroglyphical character, by which the Chinese express *a ship*, consists of *a boat*, *a mouth*, and *the number eight*. The *mouth* relates to the supposed oracularity of the diluvian ship, which was feigned to direct its votaries in an audible voice what course they ought to take: and this character, added to *the eight* and to that by which *water* is designated, presents to the minds of the Chinese the idea of *a prosperous voyage*.³ Nor was this famous number unknown to the ancient Druids. Bardic songs are yet extant, in which is celebrated the return of the mythological Arthur with his seven companions from their voyage over a boundless ocean, beneath the waves of which all the rest of mankind had been overwhelmed.⁴

XIV. I shall conclude this disquisition with

¹ Cicer. de nat. deor. lib. i. c. 13.

² Mart. Capell. Satyr. lib. ii. p. 43.

³ Bryant's Anal. vol. iii. p. 9. Eratos. Catast. xxxv. Calist. Stat. c. x. Apoll. Argon. lib. iv. ver. 580—592.

⁴ Davies's Mythol. of Brit. Druids. p. 517.

noticing the singular manner, in which the history of the deluge seems to be pourtrayed on the southern hemisphere of the celestial globe.

1. The greatest part of this division of the sphere is occupied by various aquatic animals; and water is represented as streaming upon it in almost every direction. In the midst of the waves appears the ship called *Argo*: near it is a dove, which seems to be flying towards it: and, at a small distance from it, is a raven, perched upon the back of the sea-serpent. Farther on, as if he had lately left the ship, is the fabulous Centaur; who with his lance pierces an animal, and bears it as a victim towards a smoking altar.

2. The *Argo*, thus depicted on the sphere, is claimed by the Greeks as the vessel of Jason; which bore him from Pagasæ to Colchis in quest of the golden fleece. The Centaur is equally claimed by them: and the whole catasterism is said to relate to a pretended expedition, conducted by a petty Thessalian chieftain.

It is not difficult however to shew, that such a claim was purely the result of national vanity united with a love of poetical romance.

3. With respect to the constellation, its very position alone may prove that its attached story was not of Grecian origin.

Canopus, the principal star in this catasterism, is only thirty seven degrees from the south pole; and the greatest part of the constellation lies still nearer to it. But the course of the fabled Argonautic voyage from Pagasæ to Colchis lay between

thirty nine and forty five degrees of north latitude. The constellation therefore of the Argo is alike invisible, both at Pagasæ and at Colchis. Hence it is sufficiently manifest, that the history attached to that constellation cannot relate to the pretended Thessalian expedition : for, if the Greeks had been the persons who first placed the Argo in the sphere, we may be morally sure, that they would have placed it in the northern hemisphere where they could themselves see it, not in the southern where they could not see it. Such being the case, the catasterism of the ship must have been originally arranged by a nation, which lay far to the south of Greece, and which could behold it from their own settlements. Consequently, whatever history it may relate to, it clearly cannot relate to the voyage of a Thessalian galley from Pagasæ to Colchis.¹

4. With this conclusion, all, that we are told of the Argo, perfectly agrees.

Though it is said to have been the ship of Jason, and though the poets largely describe its structure of Thessalian timber ; we are nevertheless assured, that it was the identical vessel, in which Danaus sailed from Egypt to Greece many years before the alleged epoch of Jason.² Nor is this all : we are further taught, that the Argo of the sphere is the sacred ship of the Egyptian Osiris, into which he was compelled to enter by Typhon ; and we are informed, that Typhon was a mere personifi-

¹ See Rutherford's Syst. of Nat. Philos. vol. ii. p. 849.

² Schol. in Apoll. Argon. lib. i. ver. 4.

cation of the sea, which therefore constrained the hero-god denominated *Osiris* to take refuge in the ship named *Argo*.¹ The knowledge however of the *Argo* was no way peculiar to the Egyptians and their copyists the Greeks : we find this famous ship equally familiar to the Hindoos. As the *Osiris* or *Isiris* of the former enters into the *Argo*, so the *Iswara* of the latter enters into the *Argha* : and, as the navicular goddess of Egypt was called *Isis*, so the navicular goddess of Hindostan still bears the title of *Isi*. But the *Argha* of Hindostan is manifestly the *Ark* ; for it floats upon the waters of the deluge, and afterwards flies away in the shape of a dove. Hence we may be sure, that that *Argo*, which from its position could only have been placed in the sphere by a nation much more southern than the Greeks, is no obscure Thessalian galley, but a ship the history of which was well known from Egypt to Hindostan ; a ship, which every particular attached to it proves to have been the *Ark of Noah*.

5. This is in effect acknowledged even by the Greeks themselves : although they claim the *Argo* as their own, they yet confess it to have been the first-built vessel.

Thus we are informed by *Eratosthenes*, that *the constellation of the Argo was placed in the heavens by divine wisdom* ; that *the Argo was the first ship that ever was constructed* ; that *it was built at a period of most remote antiquity* ; that *it was an oracular vessel* ; that *it was the first ship that ven-*

¹ Plut. de Isid. p. 359, 356, 363.

*tured upon the sea, which had never been previously crossed ; and that it was placed in the sphere as a commemorative token to posterity.*¹

Here we are unequivocally told, that the Argo was the first ship : a point, which at once proves it to be the Ark, and disproves it to be the Thesalian ship of the fabulous hero Jason ; for the Ark was certainly the first ship at least of the present world, but the romance of the Argonautic expedition describes the king of Colchis as already possessing a fleet when Jason arrived upon his shores. This particular also serves to identify it with the ship of the Cabiri ; who, as we have already seen, are the same as the Noëtic family and as the eight great navicular gods of Egypt. The Cabiri are said to have been the architects of the first ship : but the Argo is likewise declared to have been the first ship : therefore the ship of the Cabiri and the ship Argo are one and the same vessel.²

6. I need scarcely point out, how minutely the whole catasterism of the Argo and the minor dependent catasterisms agree with the scriptural history of the Ark.

In each appear the dove and the raven : and, in the person of the sacrificing Centaur, we obviously recognize the sacrificing Noah. Agreeably to this conclusion, Lycophron describes the primeval Cen-

¹ Eratos. Catast. xxxv.

² For a more particular account of these remarkable deities, see my Dissert. on the Myster. of the Cabiri.

taur as being no other than Saturn.¹ But every particular in the history of Saturn proves him to be the Noah of Holy Writ. The Centaur of the Sphere is also palpably the second man-bull of the Zend-Avesta ; who is said to have been compounded of a man and a bull and a horse, and who with three inferior associates is represented as the agent employed to bring on the waters of the deluge. With him, as we have already seen, is closely connected the Arg of the Magus ; which is described as resting on the summit of mount Albordi, when the streams of the flood rolled away from its emerging sides. The Arg therefore of the Persian Centaur is evidently the same as the Argo of the sphere, from which the Centaur of classical fiction appears to be issuing.

7. Now, since we find the ship Argo thus well known in the southern regions of Asia and Egypt, as well as in the more northern regions of Greece ; and since we have been obliged to conclude, that it was placed in the sphere by some ancient nation, which dwelt far nearer to the equator than the Thessalians did : we may rest assured, that it can only have been a ship in the fortunes of which all mankind were equally interested ; and we may conjecture with much apparent probability, that the various catasterisms, which jointly depict its eventful history, were first arranged by the astronomers of Babel, and that the sphere on which they were

¹ Lycoph. Cassand. ver. 1203. Tzets. in loc.

depicted was carried away to many different parts of the world by them of the dispersion.¹

XV. From the evidences, which have now been adduced, it is abundantly clear, that the heathens were well acquainted with all the leading circumstances of the deluge; and that their traditions, notwithstanding the fabulizing humour in which they so largely indulged, bear a striking resemblance to the narrative of Moses.

I have only to add, that the design of the present disquisition has been to compress into small compass, and to bring together into one point of view, those various traditions, which are the most consonant with the page of Scripture. By the whole thus combined, the moral certainty of the Mosaical history of the flood appears to be established on a basis sufficiently firm to bid defiance to the cavils of scepticism. Let the ingenuity of unbelief first account satisfactorily for this universal agreement of the pagan world; and she may then, with a greater degree of plausibility, impeach the truth of the scriptural narrative of the deluge.

¹ The Greeks ascribe the sphere to the Centaur Chiron; but the Centaur was the same person as Noah, whom pagan tradition uniformly represents as a skilful astronomer. See my *Orig. of Pagan Idol.* b. iii. c. 2. § v, vi, vii. b. ii. c. 6. § vi. 6.

CHAPTER V.

PAGAN ACCOUNTS OF THE PERIOD AFTER
THE DELUGE.

IN considering the events which took place posterior to the era of the deluge, a certain degree of caution is necessary to be used; in order to avoid the imputation of discovering coincidences between sacred and profane history, which never existed save in the imagination alone.

It appears highly probable, that the Gentiles might have had some knowledge of the postdiluvian events mentioned in Scripture, *down to a certain period*: but we have very little cause to suppose, that they were much acquainted with the internal state of the kingdom of Israel, after it was finally established in the land of Palestine. The reason is obvious: while the greatest part of the transactions, detailed in the other historical books of Scripture, concern merely the Israelites and the petty kingdoms situated immediately upon their frontiers; those, which are related in the Penta-

teuch and which approach nearer to the time of the deluge, affect, more or less, the ancestors of *all* nations.

Such a circumstance, added to the remarkable seclusion of the chosen people of God from the rest of mankind, is sufficient to destroy all probability of certain ethnical fables being derived from similar events, which happened *during the existence of Israel as a nation.*¹ The channel, through which traditions of Noah and his more immediate descendants may have been derived to the Gentiles, is easily pointed out: but it will perhaps be no easy matter to enforce a rational conviction, that the sacrifice of Iphigenia was borrowed from the history of Jephthah's daughter, or that the Scriptural Sampson was the prototype of the Grecian Hercules. The cause of truth frequently suffers no less from the ill-judged zeal of friends, than from the misrepresentations of professed enemies. To resolve *every* Pagan tradition into some corresponding Scriptural event, is the height of folly and credulity: but, to deny all resemblance and all connection between sacred and profane antiquity, is more nearly allied to a blind and indiscriminate scepticism, than to a dispassionate search after historical veracity. The truth in this, as in most other cases, is equally removed from the two extremes: and we may perhaps venture to assert in

¹ The accurately predicted national characteristic of Israel was: *the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.* Numb. xxiii. 9.

general terms, that, as it is natural to expect coincidences between the Mosaical and Gentile accounts of the *earlier* postdiluvian ages ; so, *afterwards*, either none are to be found, or, if they be discovered, we possess no certainty of their being any thing more than mere accidental resemblances.

I. The patriarch, who with seven companions was preserved at the time of the general deluge, became the great father of the renovated world. Hence, as such evident traces of the flood occur in the records of almost every pagan nation ; we may naturally expect, that the history of the ancient personage, who escaped from its waters and who was the common progenitor of all mankind, would likewise be accurately handed down to posterity. Accordingly, we have already recognized him in the characters of Xisuthrus, Deucalion, and Menu-Satyavrata ; each of whom was saved from destruction, in a manner strictly resembling the preservation of Noah. Many other traditions however, respecting this primeval personage, remain yet to be noticed ; which we shall find highly deserving of our attention.

1. Martini and Le Compte mention certain peculiarities in the history of Fohi the first emperor of the Chinese, which seem clearly to mark his identity with Noah.

He is said never to have had any father : but, as his mother was walking on the bank of a lake, she was suddenly encompassed by a rainbow ; and, having conceived in consequence of it, she brought forth Fohi. He is also said to have bred seven

different kinds of animals for sacrificial purposes ; and he is reputed to have been born in the province of Xensi ; which, excepting Sifan, is the most westerly, and therefore the nearest to mount Ararat, of all the districts of China. Here, on the mountains of Chin, he appeared immediately after what is called *the division of time* : and this division of time coincides with a deluge, which is described, *as flowing abundantly, then subsiding, and thus separating the higher from the lower age of mankind.*¹

These last particulars manifestly determine Fohi to be the same person as Noah ; who, by the vanity of local appropriation, is generally made the first king of every ancient people. Hence his birth without a father from a mother encompassed by a rainbow must inevitably mean the allegorical birth of Noah from his great mother the Ark.

2. The account given by Plutarch of the Egyptian Osiris leads us to identify him also with the scriptural Noah.

He is said to have been one of the most ancient kings of the country : and he is represented, as a husbandman, a legislator, a zealous advocate for the worship of the gods, and the first inventor of wine. Typhon, whom the Egyptians confessed to be a mere personification of the sea, conspired against him ; and by a stratagem prevailed upon him to enter into an ark, the top of which was

¹ Martin, Hist. Sin. lib. i. p. 21. Le Compté's Mem. of China. p. 313. Asiat. Res. vol. ii. p. 376.

immediately closed by his perfidious enemy. In this situation, he floated down the Nile into the sea: and, as Noah entered into the Ark on the seventeenth day of the second month; so we are specially informed, that Osiris entered into his ark on the seventeenth day of the month Athyr.¹

3. Saturn is another of those primeval characters, whom circumstantial evidence compels us to identify with the great diluvian patriarch.

He was descended, in common with all the other hero-gods, from Ocean and Tethys.² His peculiar symbol was a ship, in which he was thought to have performed a remarkable voyage.³ He constructed a wonderful cave in the middle of the ocean; within which, during a time of great peril, he inclosed his family consisting of his wife, his three sons, and his three daughters.⁴ He is usually represented with a scythe in his hand: and he is celebrated, as a skilful husbandman, and as the first planter of vineyards. He divided the empire of the world among his three sons, one of whom the Egyptians styled *Hammon*: and a story is related of this son, which seems evidently to have been borrowed from a well-known circumstance in the life of Noah; he is said to have intoxicated his aged father with honey-mead, and, while in that condition, to have bound and mutilated him.⁵ The

¹ Plut. de Isid. p. 356, 363.

² Plat. Cratyl. p. 276.

³ Ovid. Fast. lib. i. ver. 233.

⁴ Porph. de antr. nymph. p. 254.

⁵ Ibid. p. 260.

real fact is not indeed told quite accurately : but the resemblance of this legend to the Mosaical narrative is such as to leave us no room to doubt of their common origination. It was in allusion most probably to the same event, that Saturn was thought to have enacted a law, that *no one should be permitted with impunity to behold the gods naked.*¹ Bochart, in short, produces no less than fourteen points of resemblance between Noah and Saturn : and the Orphic poet, in his hymn to that deity, gives him a variety of titles, which are applicable only to the second progenitor of mankind. He is styled *the destroyer and the renewer of all things, the father of an age or of an eminent chronological epoch, and the original parent of all generations.*² In a similar manner, and with a similar reference to the deluge, Damascius ascribes to Saturn and Rhea the commencement of a new order of things, or a kind of new creation of the world.³

4. We may equally recognize the patriarch Noah in the classical Bacchus.

During his mystic infancy, he was inclosed in an ark and committed to the sea : but he drifted safe to land, and in due time was liberated from his confinement.⁴ He was thought to have been born out of a floating egg, which had long been tossed

¹ Beyer. Addit. ad Seld. de diis Syr. p. 337.

² Bochart. Phaleg. lib. i. c. 1. Orph. Hymn. xii.

³ Damas. in not. ad Phurn. Theor. sect. vi.

⁴ Pausan. Lacon. p. 271.

about at the mercy of the elements : and he was thence reputed to be the first, who came forth to the light of day.¹ Previous to his figurative birth, he was supposed to have lain hid after an ineffable manner : and, immediately after it, he planted a vineyard and became the inventor of wine.² He first brought men together into communities, and gave them laws. He was likewise their instructor in agriculture and the worship of the gods : and he was the first person who yoked oxen to the plough.³ He was represented, as sailing in a ship decked with vine-leaves and ivy : and there was a tradition, that he once performed a remarkable voyage, and was in great danger from the treachery of the mariners.⁴

5. The notion of an ancient god having three sons is not confined to classical mythology.

According to Herodotus, the Scythians ascribed a triple offspring to their tutelary deity and supposed ancestor Targitaus. The names of his children were *Lipoxais*, *Arpoxais*, and *Colaxais*. In their days, a plough, a yoke, an ax, and a goblet, all formed of gold, fell from heaven. The two first of the brethren, attempting to take them up, were scorched by a flame of fire which suddenly burst

¹ Orph. Hymn. v, xxix. Orph. Fragm. apud Macrob. Saturn. lib. i. c. 18.

² Orph. Hymn. xxix. Schol. in Hesiod. Theog. ver. 940.

³ Diod. Bibl. lib. iv. p. 210. lib. iii. p. 197. Arrian. Hist. Ind. p. 321.

⁴ Philost. Icon. lib. i. c. 19. Apollod. Bibl. lib. iii. c. 5. § 3. Ovid. Metam. lib. iii. ver. 629—700.

forth. The youngest made the last essay ; and, having received no injury, was acknowledged by the two elder as their superior.¹

In this tradition, the instruments of husbandry and the cup may possibly allude to the well-known character of Noah, a man of the earth and a planter of vineyards : while, in the superiority of the younger brother over the two elder, we are led to recognize the usurpation and tyranny of the line of Ham, in the person of Nimrod the founder of the only real universal monarchy.

The Germans were of the same great house as the Scythians : and, accordingly, in the time of Tacitus, they also venerated an ancient personage, who was thought to have been the father of three sons. In their national traditions, Tuisto, the parent of Mannus, sprang from the earth. These they supposed to have been their common ancestors : and to Mannus, the second of their deities, they attributed three sons.²

Here, in the person of Tuisto, we recognize the primitive father of mankind, formed by the hand of God from the dust of the earth ; and, in Mannus, the patriarch Noah at the head of his triple offspring.

The same gods were adored by the Goths at a still later period. In the Edda, Bore, the son of Bure, is said to have been the father of Odin and Vile and Ve : and, precisely at the time when this

¹ Herod. Hist. lib. iv. c. 5.

² Tacit. de mor. Germ. § 2.

triad flourished, an universal deluge is described as occurring, on the waters of which the giant Bergelmer saved himself in his bark.¹

6. The Mannus of the Goths is clearly the same as the Menu of Hindostan ; who, as we have seen, was preserved in an ark with seven companions at the period of a general flood. This Menu, we are told in the Puranas, was the father of three sons, denominated *Shama*, *Charma*, and *Jyapati* ; but they are erroneously represented, as having been born *after* the deluge.²

7. We may observe the character of the great diluvian patriarch equally occurring in the mythology of the ancient Celtic Britons.

Respecting their principal divinity Hu or Menwyd the following particulars are recorded in the old bardic triads. *He lived in the time of the flood : and with his oxen he performed some achievement, which prevented the repetition of that calamity. He first collected together the primitive race, and formed them into communities or families. He first gave traditional laws for the regulation and government of society. He was eminently distinguished for his regard to justice, equity, and peace. He conducted the several families of the first race to their respective settlements in the various regions of the earth : but he had instructed this race in the art of husbandry previous to*

¹ Edda. Fab. 3, 4.

² Asiat. Res. vol. v. p. 256.

*their removal and separation.*¹ His memory and character were distinctly preserved among the bards even so late as the fourteenth century. Iolo Goch thus draws his not ambiguous portrait. *Hu the mighty, the sovereign, the ready protector, a king, the giver of wine and renown, the emperor of the land and the seas, and the life of all that are in the world, was he. After the deluge, he held the strong-beamed plough, active and excellent.*²

8. Nor have the inhabitants of Otaheite, secluded as they are from the rest of the world, wholly forgotten their great progenitor.

*They speak, we are told, of a man born from the sand of the sea, who married his daughter. The daughter bore him three sons and three daughters. The father and mother dying, the brothers said, Let us take our sisters to wife, and become many: So men began to multiply upon the earth.*³

II. The first great work, in which mankind engaged after the deluge, was the erection of a stupendous pyramid in the plain of Shinar.

This undertaking was closely connected with the apostatic system of theology, which seems to have been first excogitated by Nimrod and his Cuthim, and which was too readily adopted by all the other descendants of Noah. The system in question was a specious perversion of ancient Patriarchism. It being well known, that the Angel of Jehovah

¹ Davies' Mythol. of the Brit. Druids. p. 106, 107.

² Ibid. p. 108, 109.

³ Mission. Voyage to the south. Pacif. ocean. p. 344.

had frequently manifested himself to the fathers under a human form, and that in due time he was to appear incarnate upon earth as the promised Seed of the woman : the politic framers of the new system gave out, that he had *already* been repeatedly born into the world, though a yet more remarkable descent might hereafter be expected ; that Adam, and Enoch, and Noah, were alike transmigrative incarnations of him ; that Nimrod or Nin (as the very appellation *Nin* implies) was likewise a personal descent of the Son ; and consequently that the divine Angel was fitly characterised by an ascription to him of whatsoever had been performed by those early patriarchs, in whom, it was contended, that he had been successively incarnate. Hence the chief god of the Gentiles, in every country, is found to be a strange compound of the promised Seed with the chief ancestors of mankind : and, as the worship of the heavenly bodies was soon added to this worship of herogods, the principal divinity of Paganism was naturally worshipped in the Sun, whose orb he was thought to tenant as his special and appropriate residence.

In express reference to the system thus contrived, when mankind emigrated from Armenia and descended into the plain of Babylonia, they forthwith proceeded to erect an enormous pyramidal tower. It is not difficult to prove, that the garden of Eden, and mount Ararat where the ark rested after the deluge, were nearly, if not altogether, geographically coincident. Of this circumstance

the early idolaters were not ignorant : and, as their theology immediately respected both the consecrated garden and the holy mount of God, and as it was moreover largely imbued with the speculations of astronomical Sabianism ; the pyramid, which they undertook to rear, had a direct reference to all these particulars. It was a temple, no doubt, of the Sun : but, if we stop short with this assertion, as a learned and ingenious writer of the present day has done ; though we shall speak the truth, we shall be very far indeed from speaking the *whole* truth.¹ The solar divinity of Gentilism was not the *mere* Sun ; but the great hero-god of the Pagans, worshipped conjunctively with the Sun, and viewed as the intelligent celestial regent of his orb. Now that supposed transmigrative hero-god had manifested himself in Paradise at the commencement of the old world, and on the summit of the geographically coincident Ararat at the commencement of the new world. On the top of this sacred hill, he had, at each epoch, offered up a sacrifice to the Supreme Lord of heaven and earth. Consequently, as his example was to be devoutly imitated, the most appropriate temple and altar was a natural mountain, which might aptly shadow out its prototype the Paradisiacal mount of Ararat : or, if, as in the case of a flat country, such a fane were wanting ; the deficiency was to be supplied by the devout industry of the pious, and an imitative pyramid exhibiting the form of a mountain was to be thrown up in the place of a real mountain.

¹ See Maurice on the ruins of Babylon. passim.

The first essay was the artificial hill or tower of Babel : and from it was borrowed every edifice of a pyramidal structure, in whatever part of the world it may have been reared. Each montiform temple was a transcript of the Paradisiacal Ararat : and on its summit, which was often used as an observatory, the transmigrating hero-god of the Gentiles was worshipped in conjunction with the solar orb.

It is not difficult to bring a direct proof, that this opinion is founded on real matter of fact : for we are expressly told by the Gentiles themselves, that every pyramid was a copy of the holy mount ; where the primeval garden was planted, and where the ark rested after the deluge. But it would carry me too far beside my purpose to adduce such demonstration in the present place.¹ Suffice it to say, that with this object was built the montiform tower of Babel ; which, according to the account of it handed down to us by the Greek writers, exhibited the precise figure which the Hindoos ascribe to their sacred hill Meru. It was composed of eight gradually diminishing towers, piled one upon another : so that each of its four sides, for its shape was square or parallelogrammic and arranged with

¹ The reader will find this curious subject discussed at large, with full proofs, in my *Origin of Pagan Idol.* book v. c. 7. § 1. 1. 11. 1. Mr. Maurice, in supposing the form of the pyramid to be borrowed from *fire*, has been misled by the Greek etymon of the word. His own Hindoos will teach him, that every pyramid is a *montiform* imitation of Meru.

studious reference to the four cardinal points, presented the aspect of a gigantic flight of steps.¹

As the erection of this building was undertaken for the special purpose, of consolidating the Cuthic system of idolatry, and of obstructing the divine purpose that the children of Noah should spread themselves over the face of the whole earth : it involved, not only the sin of apostasy, but likewise the aggravated criminality of open defiance and rebellion. Hence, while the new world was yet in its infancy, such a case might well seem to require the special interposition of heaven ; lest mankind should once more speedily attain to the same pitch of daring wickedness, as that which characterised the impious antediluvians. Accordingly, Jehovah descended from his celestial abode, and (unless I greatly mistake the purport of the sacred narrative) displayed himself under a human form to the toiling apostates. For the person, whom I suppose to have thus appeared, and who in the Mosaical account is denominated *Jehovah*, was that mysterious being ; who, under the title of *the Angel of Jehovah*, was wont so often to reveal himself anthropomorphically during the period of the two first dispensations, who was constantly worshipped as no other than the Divinity himself, who was explicitly acknowledged by Jacob and Hosea to be the God of Abraham and of Isaac, and who at length when the third dispensation was promulged dwelt

¹ Herod. Hist. lib. i. c. 181. Strab. Geog. lib. xvi. p. 738.

permanently among us in his usual form of a man full of grace and truth. A miraculous descent of this nature served the double purpose, of frustrating the designs of the Cuthim, and of practically confuting by an *argumentum ad hominem* the idolatrous system which they wished to establish. For the very being, whom they affected to worship as once incarnate in the persons of the greater patriarchs and as now incarnate in the person of their leader and pontiff Nimrod, suddenly appeared to their confusion; and, by a signal judgment, declared openly to the assembled multitude the folly and wickedness of such audacious speculations. Their language was broken into different dialects: their sovereign, probably by the bursting forth of fiery globes similar to those which checked the mad enterprize of Julian, was compelled to evacuate the country and to retreat into the region afterwards called *Assyria*: and they themselves were broken into various communities, and were scattered over the face of the whole earth.

An interposition thus remarkable could not easily be forgotten: for it is but natural to expect, that the dispersed builders of the pyramid would carry with them, wherever they went, the knowledge of their miraculous discomfiture. Disguise it indeed they might, and anxious they might be to shift the guilt and the shame from their own shoulders to those of a gigantic race who dared to oppose heaven itself: but still, under some form or other, an account of the fact must have been long and

generally preserved. Such, accordingly, we shall find to be the case.

1. Abydenus, in a fragment preserved by Eusebius, details the history much after the same manner that Moses does.

Some persons, says he, relate, that the first men, who sprang from the earth, relying upon their great bodily strength, and attempting to acquire a power superior even to that of the immortals, built a tower of an immense height in the place where Babylon is now situated. When its top had nearly reached the heavens, the winds, assisting the gods, overturned the immense fabric upon the heads of the builders: and its ruins henceforth bore the name of Babylon. At the same time, the language of mankind, which had hitherto been universal, was confounded and split into a variety of dialects.'

2. A similar account, if we may credit Josephus and Alexander Polyhistor, was given in the *ancient* Sibylline oracles: for I would lay no stress upon that, which occurs in the *modern* fragment thus designated. Yet they resemble each other so perfectly, that the account, which now appears in the latter, may probably have owed its origin to the citation from the former which those historians have preserved.

When all men spoke one common language, some of them built a most lofty tower, as if with an intention of scaling heaven. But the gods, sending

¹ Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 14.

*a violent wind, overthrew it, and gave a different mode of speaking to each person. For this reason, the city was called Babylon.*¹

3. To the same purpose likewise is the narrative of Eupolemus, as preserved by Eusebius.

In a work, now no longer extant, respecting the Jews of Assyria, he relates, that *the city of Babylon was the first which was built by those who had been saved from the flood, and that its founders were giants. The same persons likewise built the celebrated tower. But, this edifice having been subverted by the immediate energy of God, the giants were scattered over the whole earth.*²

4. Though I believe, that the classical fable, of the Titans or giants attempting to scale the citadel of heaven, properly relates to some daring invasion of the Paradisiacal mount, which was hazarded by the impious antediluvians immediately before the flood; both because we find this adventure ascribed to a period anterior to the cataclysm, and because the great body of the Titans are said to have been plunged into the central abyss while yet eight of their number became the principal herogods of the Gentiles: yet I think it not improbable, on the avowed heathen principle, that every world was the transcript of a former world, and that the same persons reappeared and played again the same part in each successive mundane system; on this principle, I think it not improbable, that

¹ Joseph. Ant. Jud. lib. i. c. 4. § 3. Syncell. Chronog. p. 44. compare Sibyll. Orac. lib. iii. p. 223, 224. Opsop.

² Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 14.

the early postdiluvians may have been deemed a new race of giants, and that the rearing of the Babylonian tower may have been viewed by posterity as a second attempt to storm the holy mountain.

This conjecture is rendered the more plausible, both from the circumstance of the pyramid being a studied transcript of the Paradisiacal mount of Ararat, by the Greeks denominated *Olympus* and *Ida*, as by the Hindoos *Ilapu* and *Ida* and *Ida-Vratta* and *Meru*; and likewise from the peculiar form, into which the fable, as we now have it, was moulded by the classical mythologists. They speak of the giants piling mountain upon mountain. This I take to be a poetical mode of relating, that a powerful combination of the early postdiluvians attempted to rear an enormous montiform pyramid or to construct an artificial mountain; which in fact is the very name that the Indian Puranas apply to buildings of such a description, because every pyramid is declared to be a copy of the diluvian mount *Meru*. But their project was defeated much in the same manner, as the project of the Babylonian architects according to the general tradition of the east. Jupiter thundered upon them out of heaven, and overturned the mighty fabric upon the heads of its gigantic builders.¹

5. It is a curious and very interesting circumstance, that the Mexicans should have preserved a most accurate account of this awful visitation:

¹ Ovid. *Metam.* lib. i. ver. 151—162. *Fast.* lib. v. ver. 35—42.

though, in the localizing spirit of pagan antiquity, they make their own country to be the stage of the transaction and their own grand pyramid to be the building which provoked the wrath of heaven.

The tradition still subsists among the descendants of that people : and it was found by a recent intelligent traveller to agree exactly with that statement of it, which, in the year 1566, was on the spot committed to writing by Pedro de los Rios a Spanish dominican.

Before the great inundation, the country of Anahuac was inhabited by giants. All those, who did not perish, were transformed into fishes ; except seven, who fled into a cavern. When the waters subsided, one of these giants, Xelhua surnamed *the architect*, went to Cholula : where, as a memorial of the mountain Tlaloc, which had served for an asylum to himself and his six brethren, he built an artificial hill in form of a pyramid. He ordered bricks to be made in the province of Tlamanalco, at the foot of the sierra of Cocotl : and, to convey them to Cholula, he placed a file of men, who passed them from hand to hand. The gods beheld with wrath this edifice, the top of which was to reach the clouds. Irritated at the daring attempt of Xelhua, they hurled fire on the pyramid. Numbers of the workmen perished : the work was discontinued : and the monument was afterwards dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, the god of the air.¹

Some doubts have been thrown upon the authen-

¹ Humboldt's Research. vol. i. p. 95, 96.

ticity of this tradition, as well as upon that respecting the preservation of Tezpi in an ark, as if it were the mere fabrication of the Spanish ecclesiastics : but its genuineness seems to me to be sufficiently established by the sole force of internal evidence.

A rocky cavern in a mountain was used by the Gentiles as a symbol of the ark : and every pyramidal edifice was an artificial copy of the peak, upon which rested the dark ship of the deluge.¹ Both these particulars are most prominently introduced into the present tradition : and the question is, how we are to account for their appearance. Now I will venture to say, that the Spanish ecclesiastics were alike ignorant of them both : for, though they equally characterise the ancient theology of Paganism, *the fact of their being its characteristics* can only be ascertained by a comparison of circumstances, which we may confidently pronounce to have never been instituted by the Spanish monks. The vulgar notion respecting the design of the Babylonian tower, advanced by Josephus from a misapprehension of the language employed by Moses ; namely, that it was intended as a refuge against a future deluge, and that its top was hyperbolically to be carried up to the very heavens : this vulgar notion has more or less prevailed in the Christian Church, from the time of the Jewish historian down to the present hour ; and we may be tolerably sure, that such was the idea of

¹ See my *Orig. of Pagan Idol.* book v. c. 7.

the Spanish ecclesiastics themselves. In fact, so far at least as my knowledge extends, I myself am the first person, who advanced and established by direct proof the important position, that the pyramid of Babel and every other subsequent pyramid was an avowed copy of the Paradisiacal mount of Ararat. This identical position however is recognized in the Mexican legend: and the pyramid of Cholula, to which by a common local appropriation the history of Babel has been applied, is expressly said to have been reared as a memorial of mount Tlaloc on whose summit Xelhua and his brethren were preserved in a cave during the prevalence of the déluge. That any such Mexican legend subsisted, I was ignorant at the time, when I established my position by proofs drawn from the theology of the old continent. It is obvious therefore, that the language of that legend at once shews the justice of my wholly independent conclusion, demonstrates that the superstition of the Mexicans was brought by the first colonists from Asia, and proves that the legend itself could not have been forged by the Spanish ecclesiastics. Had they been the authors of it, we may be morally certain, that the pyramid of Cholula would never have been pronounced to be a studied copy of the diluvian mount Tlaloc.

Nor is this the only matter worthy of our observation: let us turn from the Mexican legend to the pyramid itself, with which the legend has been locally associated. Now the form of the Cholulan pyramid, which still exists, is the very same as that

of the Babylonian pyramid according to the descriptions given of it by the Greek historians : save only that its altitude is less in proportion to its base, and that the number of its mutually superincumbent towers or enormous steps is four instead of eight. This diversity may easily be accounted for by the inferior skill of the Mexican architects ; rude labour more easily laying a vast base, than carrying up an edifice to a great height. The Cholulan pyramid then was plainly a local Meru or Olympus or Babel : and, as the early history of every colony is not a history of the region which it has occupied, but a history of its remote ancestors in the country which they originally planted ; we may easily perceive, when this grand imitative pyramid was reared in the American world, how the true history of a much more ancient pyramid was appropriated to it. It is worthy of special notice, that the pyramid of Cholula, like the primeval tower of Babel, has been constructed exactly in the direction of the four cardinal points ; that the solar and lunar deities, associated however as on the old continent with their corresponding hero-gods, were adored in two *sacella* erected on its summit ; and that, in reference to the object of its imitative structure, it is still called *the mountain of unbaked bricks*.¹

These various particulars leave a full conviction on my own mind, that the Mexican tradition may

¹ Humboldt's Res. vol. i. p. 86, 89, 90, 92. See a print of it in Maurice's *Babylon* or a more accurate one in the above work.

be safely received as genuine, and that it was imported from Asia by the first settlers of the country together with the established system of theology ; a system, which in all substantial points is the very same as that of the old continent.

6. From the several traditions which have been exhibited, it seems to have been a very prevailing opinion, that the descent of the Godhead at Babel was attended by a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning and wind. The same belief appears to have been adopted by the Hebrews : at least the Jew Benjamin asserts, that fire from heaven fell upon the centre of the tower, and split it through down to the very foundation.¹

A notion likewise has gained ground very widely, that Nimrod himself perished beneath the ruins of his pyramid. Such is the account given by Syncellus and Cedrenus :² and to the same purpose speaks a legend of the Hindoos, which a great orientalist has, with some probability, conjectured to be a disguised history of the Babylonian tower.

The tyrant Hirinakassap established, after the deluge, an universal empire ; boasted, that he was lord of all the visible world ; and refused to acknowledge the superiority of the incarnate mediatorial god Vishnou. His more pious son argued against such daring arrogance, and maintained the boundless power and undoubted ubiquity of the godhead. Provoked at this opposition, Hirinakassap

¹ Bochart. Phaleg. lib. i, c. 9.

² Syncell. Chronog. p. 42. Cedren. Compend. p. 11.

contemptuously asked, whether Vishnou were in that pillar. *He is*, replied Pralhaud. *Then let him come forth*, said the king; as, rising from his seat, he struck the pillar with his foot. Immediately a tremendous roar was heard: the column, perhaps the pyramid under the name of *a column*, burst asunder: and Vishnou, incarnate under the form of a man-lion, issued forth emitting vivid flashes of fire. Faithful to the instinct of the animal whose figure he had assumed, the god seized upon the blaspheming tyrant, and in an instant tore out his heart.¹

7. Yet it may well be doubted, whether this tradition respecting the death of Nimrod at Babel rests upon any solid basis: and it may be more than doubted, whether the vast tower itself was overturned or destroyed; though the building might probably be assailed by a tremendous storm, indicative of the present Deity.

Nimrod, instead of perishing beneath the ruins of the subverted pyramid, evacuated the country which had witnessed his shame and discomfiture, retired into Assyria, and there became the founder of Nineveh: for, that such is the real declaration of Moses, may be proved (I think) by incontrovertible arguments; and, that his language is fully capable of being thus understood, is confessed by our translators in their marginal version.¹ The

¹ Asiat. Res. vol. ii. p. 132. Maurice's Hist. of Hind. vol. ii. p. 15.

² Gen. x. 11. See my Orig. of Pagan Idol. book vi. c. 2. § 1.

arch apostate then himself escaped with his life : and his tower, though possibly damaged (a circumstance, which may have given rise to the exaggerated accounts of its entire destruction), still remained the unfinished monument of his folly and impiety, deserted and neglected for many ages, until Nebuchadnezzar made Babylon the seat of his empire, and repaired and completed the work which Nimrod had begun. Of an edifice so stupendous the materials could not be dissipated without a miracle, alike superfluous and unrecorded in Scripture ; for the sacred volume merely tells us, that his followers *left off to build the city* : and the peculiar form of a pyramid, like that of a mountain which it professes to imitate, tends more than any other figure to ensure perpetuity. If then the materials of the tower were not dissipated by a wholly unrecorded miracle, the tower itself, though its external brickwork might have partially suffered, must have continued in existence until the time of Nebuchadnezzar ; just as the Egyptian pyramids still remain, though ages have rolled over the heads of those deserted buildings. Such being the case, even independent of religious motives, the second founder of Babylon would find it a more easy task to repair and finish the tower of Nimrod, than either wholly to remove its materials or to work them up afresh in constructing a new pyramid.

Now, in the midst of that far famed city, as we learn from the Greek historians, there rose an enormous tower, dedicated to the god Belus, and

bearing on its mountain-summit his temple or sacellum. As I have already observed, it was composed of eight successively diminishing towers or stories, piled one upon the other: and, by comparing together the two accounts of Herodotus and Strabo, we learn, that each side of its base equalled a stadium in length, that its entire height was likewise a stadium, and that it stood in the midst of a court or inclosure which was two stadia square.*

Here then a question arises, whether a building of such vast bulk was the entire work of Nebuchadnezzar; who, previous to its construction, had painfully removed the prior work of Nimrod: or whether it was not, in reality, the original pyramid, repaired and finished and beautified.

With Prideaux and other sensible writers, I think there can be little doubt, how we ought to decide the point. A *solid* mass of sun-dried and kiln-burnt bricks; *solid*, with the exception of the central chamber mentioned by Herodotus and probably of some other comparatively insignificant cavities used by the officiating priests: such a mass

* Herod. Hist. lib. i. c. 181. Strab. Geog. lib. xvi. p. 738. There is certainly an error in the strictly literal account of Herodotus, for he makes the lowest story *alone* to be a stadium in height. But such an admeasurement, both destroys the just proportion of the tower, by giving to its pediment story the awkward and improbable dimensions of a cubical stadium; assigns, by necessary implication, to the *whole* fabric a most incredible altitude; and contradicts the later and more rational assertion of Strabo, that the *entire* height of the pyramid was but a single stadium.

would not fall to decay, like a Grecian or Roman temple of regular masonry; nor would mere time render it incapable of being repaired, as I suppose Nebuchadnezzar to have repaired it. The edifice was, in fact, an artificial mountain: and the only damage, which it could well sustain, would be some injury to the breastwork of burnt brick, that would round off the sharp angles of the successive steps and thus give more of the appearance of a natural mountain to the whole gigantic structure. Such damage as this might, with comparative ease, be repaired by a powerful and superstitious monarch: and, when the building was restored to its pristine form, and when probably one or two new stories had been added to what was left unfinished by Nimrod; the temple of Belus was erected upon its summit, after the same manner and with the same mythologic reference to the ark on the Paradisiacal Ararat, that the temples of the gods were so frequently and so studiously built upon the summits of natural hills.*

This I take to be the real history of the Babylonian tower of Belus. It was an artificial mountain, framed after the fabulous model of the sacred mount Meru or Ararat, and destined to support the temple of that chief hero-god, who offered the first postdiluvian sacrifice on the top of the Armenian peak, and who was supposed both to have emanated from the Sun and to have been translated after death to the orb of that luminary. Of this transmigrating divinity, Nimrod himself, if I

* See my *Origin of Pagan Idol.* book v. c. 7. § I. 1. II. 1, 5.

mistake not, claimed to be an incarnate descent or Avatar : and his claim was readily allowed by posterity, who zealously maintained the doctrine that the great father was successively embodied in the person of each Lama or regal pontiff. Nimrod therefore was venerated, as a reappearance of the god Belus : and, when his crumbling pyramid was repaired by Nebuchadnezzar, the fane, erected upon its summit, was not less dedicated to him than to Noah or to Adam ; for they were all equally supposed to be manifestations of one and the same often-incarnate deity, who in Holy Writ is styled *the Word* or *Angel of Jehovah*.

8. The principle of construction, which caused the pyramid of Nimrod to remain until the time of Nebuchadnezzar, has equally caused it, after its repair and completion by that monarch, to remain, though gradually wasting away, even to the present hour : and it is most interesting to trace its existence from age to age, as affording a permanent and durable testimony to the truth of the Mosaical narrative.

When Babylon came into the hands of the Persians, and when the seat of empire was removed to Susa, the once proud capital of the east rapidly fell to ruin and decay. But the desolation of its pyramid was accelerated by the hand of man. The professed iconoclast Xerxes, who adhered to the old Samanëan worship of his fathers, plundered the tower of its treasures, and ruined or rather defaced the edifice itself. He left it, I apprehend, much in the same condition that Nebuchadnezzar

had found it: and in this state of increasing decay, so far as its well defined exterior was concerned, it was received by the victorious Alexander. That prince, after the example of Nebuchadnezzar, entertained serious thoughts of repairing it; and we are even told, that he had set men to work upon the massy and almost indestructible fabric: but his design was frustrated by the hand of death, and it was never resumed by his Asiatic successors. Such, or rather still worse, was its condition in the time of Strabo, from whom we have received the preceding account. When he wrote, its several stages having nearly melted into each other by the corrosion or removal of the well defined breastwork, it presented the aspect of what he calls a vast truncated square pyramid: for the temple on its summit had been destroyed by Xerxes, and the broad square platform was now left vacant.¹

After this, but little is said of the tower for many ages, though all writers concur in bearing testimony to the utter desolation of the annexed metropolis. But, when letters revived in Europe, the curiosity of modern times soon called forth attempts to explore its mouldering remains: and there can now, I think, be little doubt, that the scite of ancient Babylon was at or near the modern village of Helle; that is to say, in a district which is still called *Babel* and where it has been fixed for ages by the standing tradition of the East.

In the year 1574, Rauwolf, a German traveller,

¹ Strab. Geog. lib. xvi. p. 738.

observed an enormous mound, which he supposed to be the remains of the Babylonian tower. But it seems probable, that he was wholly mistaken in his conjecture: both because the place, where he observed it, is two days journey from Hella; and because his assertion, that it was half a league in diameter, while it appears to have borne no very considerable altitude, does not much correspond with any idea which we can form of the ruined edifice.¹

Pietro della Valle, in the year 1616, was more successful. He leisurely and minutely explored the place, where the old tradition of the country fixes the scite of Babylon: and his labour was rewarded by the discovery of a stupendous ruin, which seems pretty evidently to identify itself with the primeval work of Nimrod, and which succeeding travellers have agreed to distinguish by the name of its first European investigator.

In the midst of a vast and level plain, says this writer, about a quarter of a league from the Euphrates, appears a heap of ruined buildings, like A HUGE MOUNTAIN, the materials of which are so confounded together, that one knows not what to make of it. Its figure is square: and it rises in form of a tower or pyramid, with four fronts which answer to the four quarters of the compass; but it seems longer from north to south than from east to west, and is in circumference, so far as I could judge by my pacing it, a large quarter of a league.

¹ Rauwolf apud Newton on the Proph. Dissert. x. vol. i. p. 304, 305.

*Its situation and form correspond with that pyramid, which Strabo calls the tower of Belus: and it is in all likelihood the tower of Nimrod in Babylon or Babel, as that place is still called—The height of this MOUNTAIN OF RUINS is not in every part equal, but it exceeds the highest palace in Naples. It is a mishapen mass, wherein there is no appearance of regularity. In some places, it rises in sharp points, craggy and inaccessible: in others, it is smoother and of easier ascent. There are also traces of torrents from the summit to the base, caused by violent rains—It is built with large and thick bricks, as I carefully observed, having caused excavations to be made in several places for that purpose: but they do not appear to have been burned, but dried in the sun which is extremely hot in those parts. These sun-baked bricks, in whose substance were mixed bruised reeds and straw, and which were laid in clay-mortar, compose the great mass of the building: but other bricks were also perceived at certain intervals, especially where the strongest buttresses stood, of the same size, but burned in the kiln and set in good lime and bitumen.**

The dimensions of the ruin, at the time when he observed it, were between 600 and 700 feet in the length of each of its four sides, and about 200 feet in its utmost height: so that its base is almost exactly the same as that of the great Egyptian pyramid, according to the accurate mea-

* Della Valle's Trav. vol. ii. let. 17. cited in Maurice's Babylon. p. 8. and in Newton on the Proph. vol. i. p. 305, 306.

surement of Greaves, who brings out 693 English feet for each of its four fronts.¹ With respect to the diminished height of the Babylonian tower, we may easily account for it from the nature of the materials. When the sun-dried bricks were stripped of their casing, the operation of the rain, during so many centuries, would be precisely what Della Valle represents: the yielding and unprotected substance would be worn into deep ravines by the torrents, which poured down the sides of the edifice; and, as the melted bricks were successively decomposed and washed away, every year would produce a diminution in the height of the building. The same causes have been producing the same effect since the visit of the Roman traveller: and Mr. Rich, to whom we are indebted for the latest account of the mouldering pyramid, states, that the total circumference of its base is now only 2111 feet; and that its present height does not exceed 140. It has lost therefore 60 feet of altitude in the course of the two last centuries.²

To the natives of this region the pyramid is known by the expressive name of *Mujelibe* or *Overtaken*; a title, which it has evidently received from the eastern tradition, that Babel was overturned by a tempest from heaven.³ At present, by the constant operation of the elements, its aspect is so precisely that of a natural mount, that M. Beauchamp, who visited it not long before Mr. Rich, declares, that he should never have supposed it to

¹ Maurice's *Babyl.* p. 125.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 9.

be the work of human hands, had it not been proved to be so by regular layers of bricks, burned in the fire, cemented with bitumen, and intermixed with osiers. Most of these, which constituted the facings and buttresses, were impressed with unknown characters : and the workmen, who were then employed to dig for bricks, sometimes discovered massy walls surrounding spacious chambers in the heart of the fabric. On the walls of one of these chambers, they found delineated the figures of a cow, of the sun, and of the moon ; the pictured representation having been burned by fire into varnished bricks or tiles. Sometimes idols of clay are turned up, exhibiting the human form : and on one brick M. Beauchamp observed a lion, and on others the lunar crescent, depicted in relief.¹ All these relate to that ancient superstition, which from Babylon, as from a common centre, was conveyed by the dispersed children of Noah to every quarter of the world.²

The account given by Mr. Rich confirms what has been said by his predecessors : and, as it is the most recent, it acquires a peculiar degree of interest ; for the visit of that living investigator is a transaction of yesterday.

Five miles distant from Hella and 950 yards from the river bank, is the ruin, which has been described by Pietro della Valle ; who determines it to have been the tower of Belus, an opinion adopted

¹ Maurice's Babyl. p. 11.

² See my Orig. of Pagan Idol. book i. c. 1. § 11. c. 4. § III. 2. book ii. c. 4, 6. book v. c. 2.

by Rennel. The natives call it Mukallibe or (according to the vulgar Arab pronunciation of these parts) Mujelibè, meaning Overturned. It is of an oblong shape, irregular in its height and the measurement of its sides, which face the cardinal points: the northern side being 200 yards in length, the southern 219, the eastern 182, and the western 136; the elevation of the south-east or highest angle, 141 feet. The western face, which is the least elevated, is the most interesting, on account of the appearance of building which it presents. Near the summit of it appears a low wall with interruptions, built of unburnt bricks, mixed up with chopped straw or reeds and cemented with clay-mortar of great thickness, having between every layer a layer of reeds: and on the north side also are some vestiges of a similar construction. The south-west angle is crowned by something like a turret or lantern: the other angles are in a less perfect state, but may originally have been ornamented in a similar manner. The western face is lowest and easiest of ascent; the northern, the most difficult. All are worn into furrows by the weather: and in some places, where several channels of rain have united together, these furrows are of great depth and penetrate a considerable way into the mound. The summit is covered with heaps of rubbish, in digging into some of which, layers of broken burnt brick cemented with mortar are discovered, and whole bricks with inscriptions on them are here and there found. The whole is covered with innumerable fragments of pottery, brick, bitumen, pebbles,

*vitrified brick or scoria, and even shells, bits of glass, and mother of pearl.*¹

Such are the numerous attestations to the Mosaic history of Babel: such the vestiges, which still remain of its stupendous mountain-pyramid.

III. The next event, which deserves our attention, is the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrha.

These cities are said by the sacred historian to have been overwhelmed, on account of their abominable impurities, with a torrent of liquid fire rained down upon them from heaven: and his narrative is equally confirmed by profane historians and by modern travellers.

1. We will begin with noticing the testimony, which is incidentally borne by the former.

Among these, Diodorus Siculus mentions the peculiar nature of the Asphaltite lake or Dead sea, which covered the country, where those towns were formerly situated. *The water of it*, says he,

¹ Rich's Memoir on Babylon. p. 28. It is not unworthy of observation, that, about six miles to the south-west of Hella, there is another large ruin, which the Arabs denominate *Birs Nemroud* or *the castle of Nimrod*. It is a mound of an oblong figure, the total circumference of which is 762 yards. At the eastern side it is cloven by a deep furrow, and is not more than 50 or 60 feet high: but at the western it rises in a conical figure to the elevation of 198 feet; and on its summit is a solid pile of brick, 37 feet high by 28 in breadth. It is covered by immense fragments of brick, converted into solid vitrified masses as if by the action of the fiercest fire. *Ibid.* p. 34—38. Whatever it may have been, its Arabic name shews how duly the remembrance of Nimrod has been preserved.

*is bitter and fetid to the last degree, insomuch that neither fish nor any other aquatic animals are able to live in it.*¹ He does not indeed assign any reason for this peculiarity; but the deficiency is amply supplied by other writers.

Tacitus relates, that a tradition still prevailed in his days, of certain powerful cities having been destroyed by thunder and lightning; and of the plain, in which they were situated, having been burnt up. He adds, that evident traces of such a catastrophè remained. The earth was parched, and had lost all its natural powers of vegetation; and whatever sprang up, either spontaneously or in consequence of being planted, gradually withered away, and crumbled into dust. The historian concludes with expressing his own belief in this awful judgment, derived from an attentive consideration of the country, in which it was said to have happened.²

In a similar manner Strabo, after describing the nature of the lake Asphaltis, adds, that the whole of its appearance gives an air of probability to the prevailing tradition, that thirteen cities, the chief of which was Sodom, were once destroyed and swallowed up by earthquakes, fire, and an inundation of boiling sulphureous water.³

The same account is given by Pliny and Solinus: so that we have as decisive evidence as can be desired, that an uninterrupted tradition prevailed

¹ Diod. Sic. Bib. Hist. lib. xix. p. 734.

² Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 7.

³ Strab. Geog. lib. xvi. p. 764.

in the country, down to a period which succeeded the Christian era, that the region of the Asphaltite lake had once been signally marked by the divine indignation.¹

2. To the testimony of pagan writers we may properly add the remarks of modern travellers, who have been led to visit this singular inland sea.

Maundrell viewed the lake Asphaltis, in the year 1697, and makes the following observations upon it. *Being desirous to see the remains (if there were any) of those cities anciently situate in this place and made so dreadful an example of the divine vengeance, I diligently surveyed the waters, as far as my eye could reach : but neither could I discern any heaps of ruins nor any smoke ascending above the surface of the water, as is usually described in the writings and maps of Geographers. But yet I must not omit, what was confidently attested to me by the Father Guardian and the Procurator of Jerusalem ; both men in years, and seemingly not destitute either of sense or probity : namely, that they had once actually seen one of these ruins ; that it was so near the shore and the waters so shallow at that time, that they went to it ; and that they found there several pillars and other fragments of buildings. The cause of our being deprived of this sight was, I suppose, the height of the water.*²

The account which Thevenot gives is much to

¹ Plin. lib. v. c. 16. lib. xxxv. c. 15. and Solin, c. 36.

² Maund. Travels. p. 85.

the same purpose. *There is no sort of fish in this sea, by reason of the extraordinary saltiness of it, which burns like fire when one tastes of it; and, when the fish of the water Jordan come down so low, they return back again against the stream; and such as are carried into it by the current of the water immediately die. The land within three leagues round it is not cultivated, but is white and mingled with salt and ashes. In short, we must think, that there is a heavy curse of God upon that place, seeing it was heretofore so pleasant a country.*¹

Thus we see, that the concurrent voice of historians, and the face of nature herself, equally serve to corroborate the authenticity of the Mosaiscal narrative.²

IV. In the same age with the destruction of the cities of the plain, flourished the regal patriarch Abraham. The pastoral magnificence and the nomade life of this eminent personage could not but make him an object of attention through a considerable part of the east: and the public curiosity would be additionally excited by the not

¹ Thevenot's Travels. vol. i. p. 194.

² It is not improbable, that, in part at least, the fable of Baucis and Philemon may have been borrowed from the history of the cities of the plain. The aged couple are visited by gods in a human form: their piety proves their safeguard: but the impious city, in which they dwelt and which shewed a total disregard to the rites of hospitality, is judiciously plunged beneath the waters of a stagnant pool. Ovid. Metam. lib. viii. ver. 618—724.

concealed circumstance, that he was specially called by the Supreme Being. Accordingly, we find him celebrated by numerous heathen historians.

Berosus, though he does not expressly mention his name, says, that in the tenth age after the deluge lived a just and upright man, deeply skilled in the knowledge of astronomy: Hecatæus wrote a whole volume respecting his history: and Nicolaus Damascenus asserts, that *he reigned in Damascus, having emigrated along with an army to that place from the country of Chaldea; but that not long afterwards he removed with his attendants into the land, which was then called Canaan, but now Judea.*¹ Eupolemius also relates various particulars respecting him, which exactly agree with the scriptural account. He was born, according to this author, in the tenth age after the flood, at a place denominated *Camara* or *Urien*; by which we are doubtless to understand *Ur* of Chaldæa: for *Camara* and *Urien* and *Ur* are all words of the same import, denoting equally that sacred *fire* which was so highly venerated in Babylonia. Pursuant to the command of heaven, he left his native country, and settled in Phenicia. During his abode there, the Armenians overcame the Phenicians in battle, and took his nephew prisoner. Abraham however, arming his servants, rescued him; and led away captive the children and the wives of the enemy. Upon an embassy being sent to him to redeem them, he nobly disdained to

¹ Joseph. Ant. Jud. lib. i. c. 7.

insult a vanquished foe ; and, content with merely accepting pay for his soldiers, he restored his prisoners to their liberty. Afterwards, in the holy city Argarizin,¹ he received gifts from Melchizedek the priest of God. In process of time, he was driven by stress of famine into Egypt. The beauty of his wife, whom he called his sister, attracted the attention of the king. But, certain marks of divine wrath pursuing that prince, he learnt upon inquiry that she was the wife of Abraham, and immediately restored her to her husband.² We find the same great patriarch celebrated likewise by Artapanus. This writer affirms, that the Jews were called *Hebrews* from the name of their ancestor Abraham :³ and he further mentions the circumstance of his having travelled into Egypt, the prince of which country he styles *Pharetho*.⁴ So again, Abraham is said by Melo to have married two wives, one his kinswoman, and the other an Egyptian slave. The latter of these bore him twelve children, who made themselves masters of Arabia ; the former a single son, whose name was equivalent in signification to the Greek word *Gelos*.⁵ As for Abraham himself, he died in a good old

¹ That is, *Mount Gerizim* ; a circumstance, which seems to shew, that Eupolemus had received this part of his narrative at least from the Samaritans.

² Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 17.

³ See some judicious remarks upon the name *Heber*, by Mr. Bryant ; Anal. vol. iii. p. 424.

⁴ Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 18.

⁵ *Laughter*.

age ; but his son Gelos became the father of twelve children, one of whom was Joseph. Abraham, some time previous to his death, received a command from God to sacrifice his son : but, when he was on the very point of putting it in execution, he was prevented by an angel ; and the intended victim was exchanged for a ram.¹ Notwithstanding the errors in this last account, respecting the *immediate* offspring of the Egyptian wife, and also respecting that of Isaac or (as Melo calls him) Gelos ; it is obvious, that the narrative is, in substance, the very same with that of Scripture. I may be permitted to observe in conclusion, that the whole of the history of Abraham is related in different parts of the Koran :² for, although this circumstance undoubtedly cannot be brought as a confirmation of Scripture, inasmuch as the one account is borrowed from the other ; yet it serves to shew the high degree of veneration, in which the memory of that Patriarch was held throughout the east. In short, as it is remarked by Hyde, his fame was diffused over the whole oriental world, and his memory was revered by almost every Asiatic nation.³

V. There is however a remarkable event in the life of Abraham ; which, though briefly noticed (as we have seen) by Melo, may justly require a more extended consideration.

¹ Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 19.

² Sale's Koran, p. 182, 369, 422, &c.

³ De Rel. Vet. Pers. c. ii.

Of the piacular sacrifice of Isaac a vivid tradition seems to have been preserved among the Phenicians: though, in consequence of the prevalent doctrine of transmigratory reappearances, they confounded the great father Abraham, who stood in the tenth descent from the flood, and who flourished at the epoch of the partial deluge of the lake Asphaltis; with the great father Noah, who similarly stood in the tenth descent from the creation, who flourished at the epoch of the universal deluge, and who was venerated by them under the Indo-Scythic name of *Il* which the Greeks expressed *Cronus*.¹

During the life-time of this hero-god, who (according to the general appropriating humour of the Gentiles,) is celebrated as an early king of Palestine, and who is said to have been translated after his death to the planet Saturn, his people were reduced to extreme distress by an unsuccessful war or (as the story is sometimes told) by a pestilential disorder. Under these circumstances, *Il* arrayed in the royal robes his only son, who from his soligeniture was in the Punic dialect called *Jehud*; placed him upon an altar; and devoted him, as an expiatory sacrifice, to the avenging demons.²

We are told in the course of the narrative, that such offerings were esteemed MYSTICAL. This particular increases the probability of the legend

¹ See Origin of Pagan Idol. book i. c. 2. § XIII.

² Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. i. c. 10. lib. iv. c. 16.

being connected with the history of Isaac. We know, that the interrupted sacrifice of that patriarch was of a MYSTICAL nature, shadowing out the future piacular sacrifice of the only-begotten Son of God: and we have reason to believe, from our Lord's declaration that Abraham saw what he eminently styles *his day*, that the father of the faithful well knew the purport of the parabolical action which he was commanded to perform. But, if Abraham were not ignorant of it; we can scarcely suppose, that it would be concealed from his household: and, if his household were made acquainted with it; from them the knowledge, both of the action and of its mysterious nature, would be speedily communicated to the tribes among which they sojourned. Hence, among others, the Phenicians may well be supposed to have received this part of Abraham's history: and hence they not only formed the legend before us, but were likewise confirmed in their belief that all sons devoted under the peculiar circumstances of Jehud were devoted MYSTICALLY.*

I say *confirmed in their belief*, because we have reason to suppose, that the doctrine itself existed among the Gentiles *prior* to the interrupted sacrifice of Isaac. This I collect from various examples which might be adduced, and particularly from the speculations of the Hindoos relative to the sacrifice of their god Brahma. Each human victim they pronounce to be an image of the immolated

* See Bryant's *Observ.* p. 286—292. and Warburton's *Div. Leg.* book vi. sect. 5.

divinity. Hence each human victim, when such rites prevailed among them, was worshipped as the representative of the god with an adoration expressly declared to be MYSTICAL. But the Phenicians were of Indo-Scythic origin: and, with the worship of Il, we may conclude that they would also import the peculiar notions attached to that worship. Those notions I believe to have originated, in the first instance, from a tradition that the Son of God, incarnate as the seed of the woman, was destined to become an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of the world. Holding therefore such notions, the Phenicians would be confirmed in them by the typical action of Abraham: and, as the doctrine of various incarnate descents of the same god was the universal doctrine of Paganism, they would obviously esteem Isaac one of the numerous descents of their often immolated middle deity.¹

That the character of Abraham in this part of his history has been engrafted upon the character of Il, I conclude, not only from the similarity of the circumstances, but likewise from another coincidence of so purely an arbitrary nature that it is difficult to account for its existence in any other manner. The identical Il, who devoted his only son as a sacrifice, is said to have first adopted the rite of circumcision and to have imposed it upon his followers.²

¹ See this curious subject discussed in *Origin of Pagan Idol.* book ii. c. 7. § III.

² Bp. Cumberland does not appear to me to adduce any

VI. From the history of Isaac let us pass to that of Jacob, which we find given at large by Demetrius as cited by Eusebius from Alexander Polyhistor.

Various are the particulars, which this writer distinctly enumerates. Among these I may notice the dissention of Jacob with his brother Esau; his flight into Mesopotamia; his marriage with the two daughters of Laban; the fruitfulness of the one and the sterility of the other; the birth of the twelve patriarchs; the rape of Dinah; the selling of Joseph into Egypt, and his subsequent promotion; his reception of his brethren, who were forced by stress of famine to buy corn in that country; and lastly, the descent of Jacob with his whole family into Egypt.¹

VII. As for Joseph, many very curious notices have come down to us respecting him.

1. The ancient historian Artapanus relates, that this patriarch, being hated by his brethren, and dreading the plots which they were daily contriving against him, besought the neighbouring Arabs to carry him into Egypt. Here, he gained so much upon the favour of the king, that he was appointed governor of the whole country; which, from previously lying in an uncultivated state, soon as-

sufficient reasons for denying the connection of this legend with the history of Isaac. He wanted in fact the real key to the riddle, I mean the doctrine of repeated transmigratory reappearances of the same hero-god. See Cumber. Sanchon. remark iii. p. 134—150.

¹ Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 21

sumed under his management a very different aspect. He divided it into inclosures, assigned to the priests their own portion, and became the inventor of standard measures. In this elevated situation, he married Asenath, the daughter of the priest of Heliopolis. Afterwards, he entertained his father and all his brethren upon their emigration into Egypt; and assigned to them for their place of residence the city Cesan, the Goshen of Scripture.¹

2. We may trace him also not obscurely in the narrative, which Manetho gives of the Shepherd-kings of Egypt.

When this foreign dynasty of princes had been expelled by the united force of the natives; another race of strangers, we are told, were placed in the district of Audris or Goshen, which had been recently evacuated by the pastoral sovereigns. Here, notwithstanding the tyranny which had been exercised over them by hard compulsory labour in the quarries, they increased to so great a multitude that the reigning king became jealous of them. On this they placed themselves under the government of Osarsiph, one of the priests of On or Heliopolis; who gave them a body of laws contrary in all respects to those of the Egyptians: for he both forbade them to adore the gods of the country, and enjoined them to intermarry only among themselves. At length, together with the expelled Shepherds who had returned into Egypt,

¹ Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 23.

they were finally driven out by the native inhabitants and pursued even to the borders of Syria. Manetho adds, that their legislator Osarsiph, when he went over to them from among the priesthood of Heliopolis, assumed the name of *Moses*.¹

3. In this tradition, Osarsiph or Sar-Josiph, who married a daughter of the Heliopolitan priest Potipherah, has been confounded with Moses: but, as the whole story sufficiently interprets itself, so another legend respecting Osarsiph fully points out his true character.

According to Eratosthenes, the real name of the younger Egyptian Thoth or Hermes was *Siphoas*.² But *Siphoas* is the same word as *Osarsiph*, save only that the one is uncompounded and the other compounded: for *Siphoas* is *Joseph*, written invertedly; and *Osarsiph* is a corruption of *Sar-Josiph* or *the prince Joseph*. The history of this *Siphoas* exactly agrees with his appellation. It is said of him, that he was envied by his brethren; who were continually laying snares for him, and plotting how they might destroy him: that on this he went into Egypt to the tribe of Cham, by which he was received with great honour: that he became the first man of the country, and was arrayed by way of eminence in a robe of gold: that he was both a philosopher and a prophet: that he foretold many things, and interpreted those oracles which the Egyptians had received from

¹ Joseph. adv. Apion. lib. i. § 26, 27, 28.

² Syncell. Chronog. p. 124.

heaven ; that he was the cause of vast wealth to their nation, and was styled by them *the giver of riches* : and that on all these various accounts he was revered as a god, and received from them the sacred appellation of *Thoth* or *Hermes*.¹

4. Nor was the famine forgotten, which afforded so remarkable an instance of Joseph's prophetic powers.

We are informed by Moses, that it *was over all the face of the earth*, and that *all countries came into Egypt to buy corn, because the famine was sore in all lands*.²

(1.) The same account is given by Diodorus Siculus.

He tells us, that, in the reign of the Athenian Erechtheus, there was a grievous famine ; which extended over the whole world, Egypt only excepted. It was occasioned by excessive drought ; a circumstance, which did not affect that country on account of its peculiar nature : because it depended (for such, I think, is the plain meaning of the historian), rather upon the annual overflowing of the Nile, than upon the less regular bounty of the atmosphere. The Athenians suffering heavily from this calamity, Erechtheus caused a great abundance of corn to be transported from Egypt into Attica, claiming such assistance in virtue of their common ancestry with the Egyptians.³

¹ Chron. Pasch. p. 44, 45. Cedren. Hist. Compend. p. 18.

² Gen. xli. 54, 56, 57.

³ Diod. Bibl. lib. i., p. 25.

We have here a narrative, not indeed *perfectly* accurate, but sufficiently so to serve as a very remarkable attestation to the veracity of Moses. The land of Egypt, like the rest of the world, was indeed deprived of its usual fertility; nor did the peculiarity of its nature save it, as Diodorus erroneously relates, from the common visitation: but then its inhabitants were exempted from the horrors of famine by the miraculous providence of Joseph; so that the historian truly enough asserts, that it alone escaped the general calamity.

(2.) The expressions *all countries* and *all lands*, as used by Moses, might fairly be taken in a limited sense as not absolutely extending to the whole globe, on the same principle as that by which the Romans were wont to call their extensive empire *the world*: yet there is some reason for believing, that the seven years dearth foretold by Joseph affected even the remote region of China; whence it is not unnatural to conclude, that all the intermediate kingdoms suffered under its baneful influence.

In the reign of Tching-Tang, an universal drought is said to have commenced, the duration of which precisely accords with that of the famine mentioned by Moses: each lasted for the space of seven years. This numerical coincidence might possibly be thought the result of mere accident, if the identity of the two calamities had not been further established by their chronological agreement with each other. The famine, described in the Pentateuch, commenced, according to Abp.

Usher, 1708 years before the Christian era ; that, which is mentioned by the Chinese historians, took place about 1740 years before the same epoch. The discrepancy therefore between the two calculations amounts only to 32 years ; a difference so trifling in so large a period, that we can scarcely entertain a doubt respecting the identity of the two events.*

(3.) Justin not only mentions the famine, but likewise the very name of Joseph ; whom he describes, as being the youngest of the sons of Israel.

He tells us, that this patriarch was sold by his jealous brethren to foreign merchants, and that by them he was conveyed into Egypt. Here, through his great skill in magic, he recommended himself to the king : and, in consequence of his wise interpretation of a dream, he saved the whole country from the horrors of a famine ; for, by his advice, the corn of several years produce was carefully laid up, that it might be ready against the predicted time of necessity. So numerous in short were the proofs

* Du Halde's Chin. vol. i. p. 299. vol. iii. p. 26. The Chinese computation is as follows. Tching-Tang reigned 13 years ; and we may suppose the famine to have prevailed during the last 7 years of his reign. To these 7 years add 116 years, the amount of the five succeeding reigns ; and we shall have 123 years. But, at the close of those 123 years, commences the 13th Chinese cycle ; which coincides with the year A. C. 1617. If then we finally add together 123 years and 1617 years, we shall have the year A. C. 1740 as the first of the seven years of the Chinese famine.

of his supernatural powers, that his answers were considered as proceeding, not from man, but from God.¹

VIII. These are the pagan traditions respecting the patriarch Joseph : various likewise are the profane authors, who speak, with more or less precision, of the great legislator of Israel.

1. According to Diodorus and Tacitus and Justin, Egypt was formerly inundated by foreigners. During their abode in the country, a pestilential disorder of the leprous kind broke out : and the native gods declared, that it never would be removed, until all the strangers were expelled. Many of these, overpowered by force of arms, retired into Greece under the command of Danaus and Cadmus. Others again, who were the ancestors of the Jewish nation, chose for their leader a person named *Moses* ; who was a man of most superior wisdom and courage, and who governed them with regal authority though without assuming the regal title. Advancing under his guidance into Palestine, they seized upon a number of cities, and particularly Jerusalem, which was held in high reverence among them on account of its temple. Moses taught them the worship of the Deity, and the peculiar ceremonies of their religion. He became likewise their lawgiver ; and divided the whole nation into twelve tribes. All idolatry he utterly forbid ; and contrived such a code of ritual observances for them, as would naturally separate them from every

¹ Just. Hist. Philip. lib. xxxvi. c. 2.

other people. He established the priesthood in one particular family; and appointed judges, instead of kings, to decide all controversies among them. The chief priest however bore the supreme authority, and he was considered as the immediate messenger and delegate of heaven. Moses concluded the volume of his laws, with claiming for them divine inspiration.¹

2. Such is the narrative of Diodorus, who wisely omits those absurd fables to which Tacitus gave too easy credence. In a similar manner Strabo notices the departure of Moses from the land of Egypt; and states at the same time, that he was accompanied by many persons who revered the Deity. He afterwards very truly remarks, that the Jewish legislator pronounced the idolatry of the Egyptians, the Libyans, and the Greeks, to be equally absurd; on the ground of its being a daring presumption to make any representation of the Most High. Strabo however is grossly mistaken in supposing the deity of Moses to be Universal Nature; an error common indeed among the Greek philosophers, but held up to abhorrence in the page of Revelation.²

3. Moses is also celebrated by Eupolemus, as being the first wise man and the inventor of letters; which the Phenicians received from the Jews, and the Greeks from the Phenicians.³

¹ Diod. Sic. ò lib. xl. Ecl. i. p. 921. Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 3. Justin. Hist. Philip. lib. xxxvi. c. 2.

² Strab. Geog. lib. xvi. p. 760, 761.

³ Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 26.

4. So likewise a copious history of him is given by Artapanus; which however corresponds so minutely with the sacred records, that it has been copied most probably from the Greek translation of the Seventy. In this narrative, the oppression of Israel, the flight of Moses into Arabia, his subsequent marriage, a circumstance similar to that of the burning bush, his divine commission to deliver his countrymen, the transformation of his rod into a serpent, the various plagues of Egypt, the spoiling of the Egyptians, the passage through the Red Sea, the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, and the support of the Israelites by manna in the wilderness, are all mentioned with the utmost particularity and exactness.¹

IX. The final evasion of God's people was marked by one of the most stupendous miracles upon record. An arm of the Red sea was divided to the very bottom of its channel: and, while its waters stood on heaps to the right hand and to the left, the Israelites marched in safety through the fissure.

1. Of this supernatural transaction, the Heliopolitans, according to Artapanus, gave the following account.

The king of Egypt, as soon as the Jews had departed from his country, pursued them with an immense army, bearing along with him the consecrated animals. But Moses having by the divine command struck the waters with his rod, they

¹ Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 27.

*parted asunder, and afforded a free passage to the Israelites. The Egyptians attempted to follow them: when fire suddenly flashed in their faces; and the sea, returning to its usual channel, brought an universal destruction upon their army.*¹

2. A similar tradition, though less minutely particular, is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, as subsisting even at the time when he wrote.

He tells us, that the Ichthyophagi, who occupied the coasts of the Red sea, had a remarkable story, handed down to them through a long line of ancestors, that the whole bay was once laid bare to the very bottom, the waters retiring to the opposite shores. This exsiccation however lasted only for a short time. The waters soon returned to their accustomed channel: and tremendous was the revulsion produced by the conflicting element.²

3. Nor is the old tradition of the country even yet extinct.

To this day, according to a respectable modern traveller, the inhabitants of Corondel and its neighbourhood preserve the remembrance of a mighty army having been formerly drowned in the bay, which Ptolemy calls *Clysmæ*.³

X. The very country indeed, where the event is said to have happened, bears testimony, in

¹ Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 27. This circumstance of the Egyptians being struck with lightning, as well as being overwhelmed by the waves, is mentioned in Psalms lxxvii, although unnoticed in the Pentateuch.

² Bib. Hist. lib. iii. p. 174.

³ Shaw's Travels. p. 349. cited by Bryant.

some degree, to the accuracy of the Mosaical narrative.

Still is the scriptural *Etham* denominated *Etti* : the wilderness of *Shur*, the mountain of *Sinai*, and the country of *Paran*, are still known by the same names :¹ and *Marah*, *Elath*, and *Midian*, are still familiar to the ears of the Arabs.² The grove of *Elim* yet remains : and its twelve fountains have neither increased nor diminished in number, since the days of Moses.³

Yet, according to the ordinary course of human events, to adopt the words of an excellent modern author ; *the distance of time is so great, and the scene of action so remote and so little frequented, that one would imagine there could have been no traces obtained of such very early occurrences. It must therefore raise within us a kind of religious reverence for the sacred writer, when we see such evidences still remain of his wonderful history. We read of expeditions undertaken by Osiris, Sesostris, Vexoris, Bacchus, Myrina, Semiramis, and the Atlantians, into different parts of the world. But no vestige remains of their operations, no particular history of their appulse, in any region upon earth. We have in like manner accounts of Brennus, as well as of the Teutones, Cimbri, and Ambrones ; also of the Goths and Visigoths, and of other swarms from the great hive in the north : all which*

¹ Niebuhr's Travels. vol. i. p. 189, 191.

² Bryant on the Plagues of Egypt. p. 404.

³ Ibid. p. 410.

are better authenticated. Yet we have only a general history of their emigrations : for the places from whence they originally came, and the particulars of their journeying, have been effaced for ages. The history recorded by Moses appears like a bright but remote object, seen through the glass of an excellent optician, clear, distinct, and well defined. But when we look back upon the accounts transmitted concerning the Assyrians, Egyptians, Medes, and Scythians ; or those of the early ages of Italy and Greece : we find nothing but a series of incredible and inconsistent events, and groupes of strange beings,

*Abortive, monstrous, and unkindly mix'd,
Gorgons, and harpies, and chimeras dire.*

The ideas, which they afford, are like the fantastic forms in an evening cloud : where we seem to descry castles, and mountains, and gigantic appearances. But, while we gaze, the forms die away, and we are soon lost in gloom and uncertainty. Concerning the Israelites, we have a regular and consistent history. And, though they were roving in a desert for forty years, and were far removed from the rest of the world ; yet we have seen, what manifest tokens remain of their journeying and miraculous preservation.¹

XI. Thus have we followed the stream of profane tradition, from the very creation itself, to the period when the Egyptian tyrant was constrained

¹ Bryant on the Plagues of Egypt. p. 425.

by the mighty arm of God to dismiss the oppressed Israelites : and, though we have frequently seen it corrupted with extraneous matter or gliding beneath the luxuriant foliage of allegory ; yet its purity has never been so far debased, as to preclude the possibility of discovering the fountain from which it originally issued.

1. We have observed, that nearly every pagan cosmogony, in a manner strictly analogous to the exordium of Genesis, describes darkness and water to be the fundamental principles of the universe : and sometimes we have even found, that the work of creation is said to have been accomplished in precisely six different periods of time.

2. Proceeding in our researches, we have met with almost a general tradition, that man was once upright and innocent ; but that, through the envy of a malicious demon, he forfeited his pristine integrity and became the sport of disease and corruption : we have seen the remembrance of that form, which the tempter assumed, preserved with an uncommon degree of accuracy : and we have beheld the universal expectation of some victorious power, some mediatorial deity, who was destined to bruise the head of the vanquished serpent.

3. Next, from the unanimous testimony of the ancient mythologists, we learned, that the depravity of mankind gradually attained to such a height, as to provoke the vengeance of heaven ; that the avenues to divine mercy were closed ; and that a tremendous flood of waters swept away every living soul in undistinguished ruin. Along with this tra-

dition, we found all nations entertaining a belief, that some pious prince was saved in an ark from the dreadful calamity, which desolated a whole world: we observed, that, in many countries, even the number of his companions was recorded with singular accuracy: we met with various evident allusions to the same awful event in the gentile memorials of the dove and the ship: and we beheld the remembrance of it entering deeply into the mythologic system of every region, whether situated in the eastern or in the western hemisphere.

4. Advancing next into the confines of the renovated world, we saw the second progenitor of mankind transformed into one of the principal gods of the Pagans, while every important circumstance of his life was accurately detailed. His mythological birth from the ark, in the midst of clouds and tempests; his skill in husbandry; his triple offspring; and the unworthy treatment which he experienced from one of his family: all these passed in review before our eyes, and stamped indelibly the bright characters of truth upon the sacred page of Scripture. We then traced the eventful history of the Cuthic Nimrod and his Babylonian tower: when the vollied thunder of heaven was directed against an impious race, and when the frantic projects of vain man were defeated by the immediate interference of Omnipotence. Lastly, we met with various records of the ancient Patriarchs in the writings of profane historians; we saw Greece and China combining to prove the real existence of a seven years famine in the days of Joseph; and

we beheld an uninterrupted tradition of the exodus of Israel preserved in the secluded deserts of Arabia.

XII. Sufficient therefore has now been said to convince any candid inquirer, that the principal facts related in the books of Moses do by no means depend upon his solitary testimony, but that they are supported by the concurrent voice of all nations. Here then, agreeably to the plan which had previously been laid down, shall be closed this view of the coincidence between profane antiquity and the earlier part of the Scriptural history. Hitherto, the external credibility of the Pentateuch has been discussed: we have next to consider the grounds of its internal or independent credibility.

SECT. II.

THE INTERNAL OR INDEPENDENT CREDIBILITY OF THE PENTATEUCH.



CHAP. I.

THE GENERAL GROUNDS OF INTERNAL OR INDEPENDENT CREDIBILITY.

I HAVE hitherto considered the external credibility of the Pentateuch, or that credibility which it claims from the general accordance of its historical part with the traditions of the Gentiles: I shall now proceed to state and discuss the grounds of its internal or independent credibility.

I. Whoever has attempted to imitate the artless simplicity of truth in a studied narration of feigned events, will have found how extremely difficult it is to avoid a perpetual recurrence of inconsistencies. In addition to the unity of time, place, and action, a thousand little delicacies, which require

the most minute and painful attention, are absolutely necessary in order to give such a composition the semblance of reality. If these be wanting, the magical illusion is immediately destroyed: and the feeling of disgust is strongly excited by the glaring deficiency of contrivance. But, when it is asserted, that the narrative, so far from being an allowed tissue of romantic adventures, comprehends nothing but plain matter of fact, the difficulty of connecting such a detail is then considerably heightened. The page of authentic history, and the accurate calculations of chronology, will present insuperable obstacles on the one hand; while some internal contradiction, some unobserved inconsistency, will equally serve to expose the imposture on the other hand.

Such being the case, there must be some principles of internal credibility, by which truth may be distinguished from falsehood: and, if those principles can be satisfactorily ascertained, I see not how that can be fictitious, which will bear the test of the application.

We are at present however concerned with something of a much more serious aspect, than any bare narrative of secular events: we have to consider a narrative of events interwoven with an authoritative promulgation of a theological system: we have to deal with a writer, who, instead of being a simple historian, claims to be an inspired delegate of heaven, and who professes to deliver a code of laws enacted by the Supreme Being himself. To admit the validity of these demands upon our ac-

quiescence, more especially when so many palpably false religions have been ushered into the world under the confident pretence of divine inspiration, we have surely a right to demand the utmost possible conclusiveness of moral evidence: nor can we be expected to submit, unless the wholesome jealousy of suspicion be overcome by arguments, which, as reasonable beings, we find ourselves unable to controvert.

Now it is easy to conceive in theory the peculiar kind of internal credibility, which would stamp with marks of indisputable truth the religion which should possess it: and such a theory is not affected either by the existence or by the non-existence of an authentic revelation from heaven; it is purely an abstract idea, like those pictures of a perfectly wise and good man, which the ancient philosophers pleased themselves with delineating.

The principles of this internal credibility I would lay down under the following rules: and, as it is difficult to conceive how any religion can be false which will bear the test of such an examination; so it will be found, that, while no mere imposition is built upon those principles, they constitute the very basis of the Mosaical dispensation.

1. The promulger then of any theological system, which really comes from God, must be shewn not to have been self-deceived into a belief, that he was divinely commissioned; a deception, which could only originate, either from enthusiasm, or from mistaking certain natural appearances to be miracles.

2. He must be further shewn, on the ordinary

grounds of estimating men's conduct, not to have been an impostor; that is to say, he must be shewn to have had no intention to deceive others.

3. Authentic historical documents must have been handed down to posterity from the time when the theological system in question was promulgated: and certain commemorative ordinances or monuments must have existed from the period, when various events occurred which are mentioned in the history attached to the theological system; those commemorative ordinances or monuments being declared to have derived their origin from the identical events, which accordingly they profess to commemorate.

4. The promulger of the theological system must have been endowed with the power of working miracles, as an attestation that he was indeed a messenger sent from God: and those miracles must be of such a description, that they could not have been effected by the mere artful contrivance of a designing impostor. This evidence is necessary for the rational conviction of those, to whom the revelation was immediately delivered.

5. He must likewise have been endowed with the power of predicting future events, as a second attestation of his being a messenger from heaven: and his prophecies must be of such a nature, that the events foretold could not have been prognosticated by the human sagacity of an intelligent statesman wisely deducing effects from known and existing causes.

6. The basis of his revelation must be one all-

wise and all-good and all-powerful Divinity: for, as the very circumstance of a revelation presupposes the existence of a divine revealer; so the doctrine of the unity of God instantaneously approves itself to right reason, while the doctrine of a plurality of gods distinct from and independent of each other, whether they be deemed mutually equal or unequal, if closely scrutinized, will be found to involve a palpable self-contradiction.

II. If now we examine by these rules the several cognate religions professed by the Gentiles, we shall invariably find them deficient in one or other of the preceding requisites.

Thus, so far as we can judge by accounts which have come down to us, we have no sufficient cause to believe, that the original framers of Paganism, however modified, were either really inspired, or that they even fancied themselves to be so. On the contrary, we have every reason to imagine, that Idolatry (and the same observation equally applies to Mohammedism) sprang, so far as the object of it is concerned, from a wish on the part of certain ambitious characters to acquire extensive political influence.¹

But, even if these two particulars were not sufficiently manifest, we possess no documents which can be proved to have been written about the time when the mythological wonders of Paganism are alleged to have taken place: and, though I believe,

¹ See this point discussed at large in my *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*. book i. c. 1. § 1v, v. book vi. c. 2, 6.

that in many instances the commemorative rites of the Gentiles did really commence not long subsequent to the occurrence of the facts which they claim to commemorate (for I have little doubt, that Idolatry was first excogitated by Nimrod and his adherents, and that the facts commemorated were the events of the first ages); yet the facts themselves are distorted in so extraordinary a manner and are clothed in such a veil of fabulizing allegory, that they manifestly cannot be received as they are exhibited in the tales of the pagan hierarchy, but that they stand in need of some unadorned and authentic history to serve as a key to them and thus to set them forth in their true colours.

These remarks may be aptly exemplified in the theological system of the Hindoos; which, though substantially the same as that of the Greeks and the Egyptians, has come down to us in a form apparently less altered from the original design than any other modification of Paganism.

Sir William Jones pronounces the Institutes of Menu to have been composed full 1280 years before the Christian era: and I am much inclined to allow them to be an adapted transcript of the ancient Iranian code even of Nimrod himself.¹ I further think it probable, that the Puranas have been copied from those old Babylonian books, which state-policy ascribed to Xisuthrus or Noah: for there is every reason to believe, that the Brahmens were an eminent branch of the Chusdic Maghas or

¹ Pref. to Inst. of Menu. p. vii, viii.

Magi; and it is even said, that they still possess books in the genuine Chaldaic dialect.* But we shall be able to draw no other inference from this concession, than that Paganism was built on the same facts as a purer and more ancient religion, of which it is a manifest corruption: I mean the religion of the primeval patriarchs. If we attentively peruse the Institutes and the Puranas, we shall distinctly perceive that the old theology of Hindostan bears on the very face of it the marks of deliberate politico-sacerdotal imposture. The whole community, as was the case likewise in Egypt and Britain and many other ancient nations, is divided into castes or classes; of which the Priesthood occupies the first rank, and the Military Nobility the second. These two powerful and coöperating classes keep in their own hands the whole authority of the state: and, while the multitude are condemned to a hopeless degradation from which no talents and no virtues and no exertions can elevate them, the superiority of the Brahmens and Cshatryas is jealously and most disproportionately guarded by the awful sanctions of religion.

A twice-born man, who barely assaults a Brahmen with intention to hurt him, shall be whirled about for a century in hell. He, who through ignorance of the law sheds blood from the body of a Brahmen, shall feel excessive pain in his future life: as many particles of dust as the blood shall roll up from the ground, for so many years shall

* Orig. of Pag. Idol. b. vi. c. 3. § VI. 2. (1.) p. 486.

the shedder of that blood be mangled by other animals in his next birth.¹ Never shall a king slay a Brahmen, though convicted of all possible crimes. No greater crime is known on earth than slaying a Brahmen: the king therefore must not even form in his mind an idea of killing a priest.² A Brahmen, whether learned or ignorant, is a powerful divinity.³ From his high birth alone, a Brahmen is an object of veneration even to deities.⁴ For killing intentionally a virtuous man of the military class, the penance must be a fourth part of that ordained for killing a priest; for killing a Vaisya, only an eighth; for killing a Sudra who had been constant in discharging his duties, a sixteenth part.⁵ For striking a Brahmen even with a blade of grass, or tying him by the neck with a cloth, or overpowering him in argument and adding contemptuous words, the offender must soothe him by falling prostrate.⁶ The corporeal frame of a king is composed of particles from the eight guardian deities of the world: he consequently surpasses all mortals in glory. Like the sun, he burns eyes and hearts; nor can any human creature on earth even gaze on him. A king, even though a child, must not be treated lightly from an idea that he is a mere mortal: no, he is a powerful divinity, who appears in a human shape.⁷ Brahmens are declared

¹ Instit. of Menu. c. iv. § 165—168.

² Ibid. c. viii. § 380, 381.

³ Ibid. c. ix. § 317.

⁴ Ibid. c. xi. § 85.

⁵ Ibid. c. xi. § 127.

⁶ Ibid. c. xi. § 206.

⁷ Ibid. c. v. § 96. c. vii. § 4, 5, 6, 7.

to be the basis, and Cshatryas the summit of the legal system.¹ The military class cannot prosper without the sacerdotal, nor can the sacerdotal be raised without the military : both classes, by cordial union, are exalted in this world and in the next.²

Such are the professedly divine Institutes of Menu. With respect to the rites of the old Indian theology, they are indeed commemorative; and the facts, to which they relate, when rightly understood, are genuine historical facts: but, that the portentous form which those facts assume in the received theology ought to be viewed as the offspring of mere fiction, is acknowledged even by the very authors of the books in question. It is a curious circumstance, that the writer of the Hindoo account of the deluge expressly tells us at the close of his narrative, that the monstrous fish which converses with Menu is absolute delusion, and that the whole story as *he* relates it is to be understood as an allegorical tale.³ Here then we have an unreserved confession, that the specious wonders of Paganism were no real wonders, but that they were introduced into sober history by way of throwing over it a veil of mystic obscurity. Just the same remark applies to the Babylonian account of the creation, which is said to have been revealed by a merman who came out of the Erythræan sea. Berosus fairly allows, that the gigantic demon Omoroca, the various monsters over which she

¹ Instit. of Menu. c. xi. § 84.

² Ibid. c. ix. § 322.

³ Asiatic Research. vol. i. p. 234.

presided, and her destruction by the god Belus, were all to be viewed as nothing more than an allegorical description of nature.¹

As for the miracles, which are said to have been wrought by human agents in attestation of Paganism, such for instance as those of Apollonius Tyanæus or Vespasian or Adrian or the priests of Esculapius, they will not bear the test of sober and dispassionate examination. Either they were done in a corner; or they bear evident marks of dexterous imposture; or they were effected in the case of persons, who had a plain interest in flattering the vanity of the deified Roman emperors.

Equally may we discard, with merited contempt, the pretended vaticinations of the Gentiles. The ambiguity of the Delphic tripod is even proverbial: and, with respect to the famous prophecy (as it has been called) of Seneca that a mighty continent should hereafter be discovered in the inmost recesses of the ocean; it is evidently nothing more, than one of those ornamental flights of poetry, which might occur to any person, and which might or might not be accomplished. In the fact itself there was nothing improbable; and, from the gradual progress of the arts, it was very natural to expect, that navigation would in process of time be considerably improved.

On the universal polytheism of the Gentiles, it is plainly superfluous to dilate; the bare fact itself needs only to be mentioned.

¹ Beros. apud Syncell. Chronog. p. 29.

III. I might add, that every system of Paganism contradicts all ideas, which we can form of a holy and merciful Divinity : for, wherever the demon of Idolatry has appeared, cruelty and impurity have been his constant attendants ; human sacrifices have been associated with systematic debauchery ; and not only have the worst deeds of darkness been perpetrated, but, what is the grand characteristic of Paganism, they have formed an essential part of the system and have been perpetrated even on principle. I might further add, that the Mosaical dispensation, however its numerous ritual observances may require to be explained by that consummating revelation of which they were but so many preparatory types and shadows, is worthy of the Supreme Being, from the purity which it inculcates, from the adequate views which it gives us of his hatred of sin, and from the circumstance of its strictly prohibiting all those gentile abominations of which even the better and more enlightened Heathens could discern and acknowledge the enormous depravity.

On this point however I forbear to insist : because it might appear, in some measure, to be arguing in a circle.

Since moral duties, in their quality of *duties towards God*, can only be learned *authoritatively* from a genuine revelation : we cannot perhaps be allowed to argue backward, from the *unauthorized* view which we might entertain of them *independent* of a divine communication, to the truth or falsehood of any given religion. Our feelings indeed almost

compel us to reason in this manner ; but possibly the strict rules of logic may forbid us, lest haply we be whirled round in the vortex of the circulating syllogism. We all know from experience, that murder, adultery, and fraud, are offences against *society* ; because we find, that, if they were wholly unrestrained, the very frame of a body politic would be necessarily unhinged : but we must first learn the nature of God (and *that* we *can* only learn from revelation), before we can positively declare, that they are *also* offences against the Deity ; and consequently that no religion, which sanctions them, can proceed from him. We feel it indeed to be perfectly agreeable to right reason, that they *should* be offensive to the Supreme Divinity ; and, in a state of nature, we might very plausibly argue, that they *are* offensive to him : but, when we consider that *crux philosophorum* the origin and permissive existence of evil both moral and physical, I know not, how we could so absolutely *demonstrate* the point *a priori*, as to make *our* views of it the test of a possible revelation from heaven. Hence I choose rather to argue in an opposite direction : and, instead of seeking to prove the divine origin of the Pentateuch from the sanctity of its precepts, I would establish its inspiration by a different process ; and then rest satisfied, that whatever it enjoins or prohibits must have been so enjoined or prohibited according to the dictates of the highest wisdom.

Such a plan has this grand advantage, that it silences at once every captious objection of infi-

delity. Those persons reason very weakly and inconclusively, who from specious difficulties would argue the Pentateuch to be a fraud upon the credulity of mankind : they ought rather in the first instance to inquire, what direct evidence there is both for its authenticity and (what inevitably follows from its authenticity) for its divine inspiration ; and, if this evidence be found irresistible, they ought then to submit themselves to the decrees of heaven, assured that whatever God does *must* be right. This, in fact, is but the natural process of a reasonable mind : for, if once it has been demonstrated that a religious code has proceeded from heaven, it is a palpable absurdity to object to any particulars which it contains.

CHAP. II.

THE EVIDENCE THAT MOSES WAS NOT AN
ENTHUSIAST OR A DUPE,

THE history of the world has afforded numerous instances of persons, who have devoutly believed themselves to be under the immediate guidance of a superior power, and who have proceeded to act under that impression. Yet we scruple not to reject their pretences; and we feel not ourselves, in the least degree, compelled to abide by their declarations. The reason, why we act in such a manner, is; because, after a due inquiry into the matter, we are fully convinced that these persons had no call whatsoever from heaven. We are satisfied, either that they were merely under the influence of a heated imagination, or that they had imposed upon themselves by some ill-understood or delusive appearance. Hence, as we evidently find them to be wretched enthusiasts, either in consequence of the reflex operation of a lamentably

distorted intellect, or by reason of the deplorable self-deception of palpable ignorance; we reject their testimony, without at all trembling at their angry denunciations against the unbelieving.

Such being the case, the question immediately and involuntarily presents itself to us, whether Moses, from some cause or other, ought not to be deemed a religious enthusiast; and whether, as fanaticism is proverbially infectious, his followers ought not to be viewed under the same aspect.

For the due solution of this question, we must shew, that *Moses, when he asserted his divine legation, was not deceived into a belief that he was supernaturally commissioned, either by mere enthusiasm, or by imagining certain physical appearances to be miracles which were not so in reality.* And it may be useful to prove additionally, by way of completing the main argument, that, *even if such had been the character of the leader, he could not, by the line of conduct which he adopted, have imparted it to his followers.*

I. To judge, how far it is probable that Moses was a mere enthusiast, by which I mean a person labouring under the reflex influence of a heated imagination, it will be necessary to take a review of his early education and habits and apparent temper of mind, previous to his claiming the office of a heaven-sent prophet and legislator.

1. Moses, while an infant, had been discovered by the daughter of the king of Egypt, exposed to perish upon the waters of the Nile. The princess, moved to compassion by his helpless situation,

preserved him, and had him educated as her own son.

Egypt, both at that period and long afterwards, was celebrated over the whole world for its science and literature. Perhaps it is not so easy, at this distance of time, to determine, in what the wisdom of Egypt consisted : but, as the Greeks seem to have borrowed the most of their philosophy from that nation, as there was a very early connection between Egypt and Hindostan, as the wisdom of the children of the east is proverbially united with the wisdom of Egypt, as the wisdom of Solomon is said to have excelled them both, and as that wisdom is described to be partly moral and partly physical ; ¹ it is probable, that the wisdom of Egypt exercised itself, sometimes in refined and abstract speculations on the nature of a first cause, sometimes in the important inquiries of political economy, sometimes on the duties taught by the apophthegm or apologue of moral philosophy; and sometimes in exploring the varied wonders of physiology. With this supposition, at least, such accounts as have come down to us of the sacred books of Thoth will be found exactly to tally : for, out of the forty two volumes ascribed to that ancient personage who is made coëval with the deluge and the Cabiri, thirty six are said to have comprehended the whole circle of Egyptian philosophy, moral and natural and theological ; while the remaining six

¹ 1 Kings iv. 29—34.

peculiarly treated of medicine and anatomy.¹ With it likewise agrees the account, which Clemens gives us from Philo, of the manner in which Moses received his education. He learned, we are told, arithmetic, geometry, rhythm, harmony, medicine, music, philosophy as taught by the hieroglyphics, astronomy, and that whole circle of sciences in which the kings of Egypt were wont to be instituted. His masters were the Greeks, the Chaldeans, and the Egyptians; a notion, which probably originated from the circumstance, of the royal Shepherds having emigrated from Babylonia into Egypt, and of their having afterwards, when they were expelled from that country, largely colonized Greece.² But, whatever might be the nature of this far-famed wisdom, we are informed, that Moses was learned in the whole of it.³

Now the effects of a profound knowledge of philosophy are very seldom either enthusiasm or superstition. Such knowledge indeed, which the kings and priests of Egypt were accustomed with jealous care to confine to themselves and to withhold from the vulgar, might, in an age when science was not universal but was chiefly locked up in the adyta of the temples, admirably qualify a man to make dupes of *others*: but it would have no tendency to make the possessor *himself* an enthusiast; though, for the purposes of deception,

¹ Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vi. p. 633, 634. Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. i. c. 10.

² Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 343.

³ Acts vii. 22.

he might affect to view his own experiments in the light of miraculous interpositions of heaven. But we are at present concerned only with shewing, that Moses was not an enthusiast: and certainly the education, which he received, was not very likely to produce a character of *that* description.

2. The Hebrew legislator moreover was brought up in all the luxury and refinement of a splendid court.

But such a mode of education is obviously very far from being favourable to enthusiasm. A fanatical turn of mind is most frequently gendered in solitude and retirement; where the soul, for want of external occupation, has leisure to look inward, and is thus led to prey upon itself. We rarely find the enthusiastic humour prevalent amongst those, who enter largely into *mixed* society: and this, from the peculiar circumstances under which Moses was placed, must necessarily have been his ordinary habit. At all events, whatever tincture of enthusiasm he might receive from his familiar converse with the priests and philosophers and statesmen of Egypt, it would be wholly *favourable*, not *adverse*, to that extraordinary system of theology; which had in it so much to interest the curiosity, and which held out such temptations to apostasy as the Israelites through a long series of years were perpetually unable to resist. Yet the enthusiasm of Moses, if enthusiasm it was, took a directly opposite flight. He contemned the religion, which had been made familiar to him from his infancy: he inclined to the theism of his

degraded and harassed brethren: and, when he assumed the office of a prophet and a legislator, what he promulgated and enjoined, as was distinctly seen by that acute observer Tacitus, immediately and vitally opposed the theology of the Gentiles.¹

3. But it may be plausibly said, that, when Moses found himself an exile, and when he perceived that every hope of preferment in the Egyptian court was at an end, hostility to Paganism would not unnaturally spring up in his breast: and that, as he had now exchanged the mixed and dissipating society of a palace for the deep seclusion of a wilderness, various enthusiastic fancies might be engendered in his new situation, which would never have occurred to him had he remained in Egypt. Brooding in sullen discontent over his blasted prospects, and ruminating upon the oppressed condition of his people, nothing was more probable, than that, amidst the wild scenes of the desert, he should fancy himself called to be their deliverer, and that, from the workings of a heated and gloomy imagination, he should deem himself a heaven-inspired prophet. In all ages, the seclusion of the wilderness, where nought meets the eye save rocks and precipices and mountains and torrents, has been favourable to the spirit of enthusiasm: and the same causes, which operated so forcibly upon the melancholy ascetics of the Thebais, perhaps also upon the Arabian Mohammed while in the solitude of the cave of Hera, might operate no

¹ Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 4, 5.

less irresistibly upon the corroded mind of the disappointed courtier.

What might be the workings of his heart during the forty years of his retirement, it is impossible for us to determine : but, so far as appears from the very brief narrative which he has given us of that period, he seems to have lived, not in that absolute solitude which might engender fanaticism, but in the rational happiness of quiet domestic seclusion.

All regrets assuaged,

And every hope resign'd, life's every storm
Remote past sight and hearing, or beheld
From station shelter'd safe, forgetfulness
Slept on the bosom of domestic bliss,
Mindless of past or future, and content,
If rooted, like the palms and cedars round
(Each in his sylvan station), he might cling
To the same spot of earth, from vigour there
To sickness and decrepitude decay,
On conjugal and filial love recline
His hoary head, and 'mid the rocks and woods
Of Midian to the peaceful dust return.*

The family of Jethro was not a small one : for he had six daughters besides the wife of Moses ; and these would most probably espouse some of the neighbouring emirs. Thus, while two sons were born to himself, the circle of his society would be gradually enlarged ; and every thing would tend, not to make him an enthusiast, but to wean him both from Egypt and from Israel and to attach

* Hoyle's Exodus. book viii. ver. 7—19.

him to a condition far more happy than what ordinarily falls to the lot of mortals. I might add, that, as his philosophical education would have a natural tendency to check any approach to fanaticism, so it would enable him to fill up in an agreeable manner those hours of vacuity, which might otherwise serve to conjure up the grotesque phantoms of a disordered imagination. On the whole, we find nothing in his Midianitish seclusion, which at all resembles the gloomy and unbroken solitude of a sullen ascetic; nothing beyond the rational retirement of a man devoted to quiet domestic habits; nothing which seems to indicate the probable growth of an unchecked enthusiasm.

Accordingly, that he was *not* an enthusiast, and that, so far from meditating any change in his condition, he was strongly attached to it; appears, in a very striking manner, from the account which he gives us of his receiving his divine commission.

Whatever an enthusiast does, he of course *wishes* to do. Hence, instead of starting any difficulties *himself*, he is commonly much irritated at those who seek to divert him from his purpose. *He* sees no dangers: *he* weighs no probabilities of disappointment. The conviction of a divine call is with *him* sufficient to silence every rational argument. Instead of raising any objections, instead of testifying any unwillingness; *he* rushes eagerly forward, full of confidence in his imaginary delegated powers, and impressed with the most lively assurance that complete success will finally crown his endeavours. Such was the universal charac-

teristic of those numerous impostors, who started up before and after the sacking of Jerusalem. Impostors as they *effectively* were, their conduct clearly enough indicates, that they had actually persuaded *themselves* into a belief that they were divinely commissioned. Thus Theudas induced a great multitude to follow him; under the promise, that, like Joshua of old, he would miraculously open a passage for them through the river Jordan. Thus also Jonathan the weaver and many others of the same stamp persuaded great numbers to go forth with them into the desert; declaring, that, like Moses, they would there shew them wonderful signs, and that they would deliver them from the tyranny of the Romans as *he* had similarly delivered their ancestors from the yoke of the Egyptians.¹ All these with their deluded followers miserably perished, as might of course be expected: but still it is difficult to believe, that they would ever have needlessly pledged themselves to perform what was so clearly impracticable, unless they had first contrived to persuade *their own* minds that they were in truth acting under a divine impulse.

Now, so far from our being able to discover any such precipitate forwardness and rash confidence on the part of Moses, we may plainly observe in him a very strong degree of reluctance to undertake the office of liberating Israel. He again and again requests to be excused from the ungrateful task. He starts every difficulty and objection, which the

¹ Joseph. Ant. Jud. lib. xx. c. 4. § 1. c. 7. § 10. Joseph. de bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 13. § 4. lib. vii. c. 11. § 1. Hudson.

wit of man can imagine. First he asks, *Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?*¹ Next he urges, *When I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?*² Then he objects, *Behold, they will not believe me nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.*³ Afterwards his plea is, *O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.*⁴ At length, when all his objections are over-ruled, he fairly owns his utter dislike of the task, and beseeches God to appoint another: *O my Lord, send I pray thee by the hand of him, whom thou wilt send.*⁵

This reluctance is unaccountable, on the supposition that Moses was a discontented and impatient enthusiast. If we allow for a moment, that a person, under the influence either of fanaticism or hallucination, might *imagine* such a conference as that recorded in the Pentateuch: still a person of that description, from the very temper of his mind, would be little given to start objections against a fancied call; and yet less would he decline it altogether. But, unaccountable as this reluctance is

¹ Exod. iii. 11.² Exod. iii. 13.³ Exod. iv. 1.⁴ Exod. iv. 10.⁵ Exod. iv. 13.

on the supposition of enthusiasm ; it is perfectly intelligible, if we allow Moses to have been free from that mental disorder. He was living in much domestic comfort, which he had no inclination to resign : he had formed a new set of connections, which he was unwilling to relinquish : he was growing into years, and wished not to be disturbed : he had contracted a habit of rustic indolence, and shrank from an enterprize full of trouble if not of absolute danger : he had already proved the temper of his countrymen when long since he rose up to vindicate their wrongs, and he had no inclination to harass himself any further about them. A man under such impressions will not the more affect a laborious and comfortless office, because he is assured of supernatural power to execute it. He may indeed obey : but, so far as natural liking is concerned, the gift of miracles will not make him in love with trouble, nor will it induce him joyfully to exchange a life of ease for a life of toilsome anxiety. If among ourselves a retired and domestic man, in the decline of life, fixed in his habits, and with all his accustomed comforts about him, were suddenly commanded by a voice from heaven, which forthwith approved itself to be no deception by enabling him to work a miracle upon the spot, to leave his family and to transport himself as an evangelist to the heart of China ; if it were promised to him, that he should be secure from all personal danger, that God would be preternaturally with him, that his ministry should be illustrated by a most stupendous display of portents ; and if he

were amply convinced by the divine speaker, that his efforts should be attended with complete success, though it would be necessary for him to dedicate the whole of his remaining life to the business: if a devout English believer so circumstanced received such a commission; it may be well doubted, whether *in itself* it would excite any very lively emotions of joy; it may be well doubted, whether he would not rather wish to decline the painful honour which courted his acceptance; it may be well doubted, whether he would not be ready to take up the deprecation of Moses, *O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.* Some such natural feelings plainly enough influenced the mind of the secluded octagenarian shepherd: but those feelings are no less plainly inconsistent with a wild and daring enthusiasm.

If it be objected, that ambition alone will sometimes lead men to encounter hardships and difficulties at a very advanced period of life, and therefore much more ambition when united with enthusiasm: I reply, that this will never be found to happen, except when a person has been incessantly accustomed to bustle and activity. Habit has then made a strong stimulus a necessary enjoyment: and, even on the verge of the grave, he will rush with all the ardour of expected happiness into scenes, which would give a death-blow to the serene felicity of reposing age. Moses, on the contrary, had led a life of complete inactivity during forty years. His habits were fixed in quiet

domestic indolence. To have all his plans of happiness therefore suddenly and unexpectedly broken in upon by a peremptory mandate from heaven, must have been unspeakably grievous to the feelings of a peaceful old man, whose dreams of ambition were long since vanished into empty air, and who panted after nothing so much as the carelessness of his wonted repose.

4. Here it may possibly be contended, that, whatever might induce Moses to quit his retirement in Midian, his unceremonious address to Pharaoh is precisely what might be expected from an inflated and self-important enthusiast: *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.*¹

I freely allow, that such is exactly the language which a fanatic would use. Without any respect for dignities, he would at once make his demand, would assert that the Lord had sent him, and would intimate that a judgment might be expected to follow a refusal. But what then? Would a mere fanatic compass his ends the better by employing this language? So far from it, he would be speedily ordered out of the royal presence: and his demands and his pretensions would be alike treated with well-merited contempt. Moses, on the contrary, reluctant as Pharaoh was, did certainly at length, by some means or other, extort his consent. So far as the matter of fact is concerned, the Israelites were brought out of Egypt, though the king artfully

¹ Exod. v. 1.

disapproved of their emigration. How was this effected, if Moses were nothing more than a rash enthusiast? Theudas promised to divide Jordan, if the people would follow him: Moses threatened Pharaoh with God's immediate vengeance, if he presumed to detain the Israelites. In what manner were these different engagements fulfilled? Theudas and his followers miserably perished by the Roman sword: Moses and his followers marched out of Egypt in despite of the Egyptians, and the Hebrew nation finally succeeded in establishing itself in Palestine. How are we to account for this prodigious difference of result, if Moses and Theudas were two wrong-headed enthusiasts? The language, employed by the former in his interview with Pharaoh, is clearly that, either of a rank fanatic, or of a conscious heaven-sent prophet. Either of the characters would use such language: the one, because he fancied himself to be God's delegate; the other, because he was really so. If a mere enthusiast used it, he would fail of success: if true prophet employed it, the predicted result would follow. But Moses safely conducted the Israelites out of Egypt, as the gentile writers themselves acknowledge. Therefore Moses could not have been a mere enthusiast, whatever may have been the mode in which he accomplished his purpose.

To the preceding arguments we may add that, which is derived from the texture of the Law itself.

If we find no traces of enthusiasm, but rather evident marks of sound moral feeling and of deep

political wisdom. The code is built upon the best principles : and every thing in it is admirably calculated to produce the desired and avowed object, the worship of one sole God, and the separation of Israel from the pagan world. No mere enthusiast could ever have excogitated such a volume.

An infidel may perhaps urge, that none but a fanatic would have promised victory and success upon condition of obedience to his statutes.

He forgets, that an inspired delegate of heaven might have been ordered to do the very same. Whether Moses was the one or the other, must be determined by the accomplishment or the non-accomplishment of the promise. An enthusiast might so promise, but he could not perform : a true prophet only could both promise, and ensure performance. If the making then of such a promise be an argument of enthusiasm on the part of Moses, the due performance of it must be no less an argument of his divine legation. The promise in question must either have been accomplished, or not accomplished. If accomplished ; then Moses must have been an inspired prophet : if not accomplished ; then the Israelites, like the deluded followers of Theudas, must soon have detected his falsehood, and must soon have found reason to lament their own absurd credulity. The fanatical partizans of the covenant promised the Scottish army a complete victory over Cromwell : but they found it more easy to make, than to fulfil, their promise.

II. It may be objected, that, if Moses were

not an absolute enthusiast, he still might be a dupe: that is to say, he might possibly mistake some of the more wonderful phenomena of nature for miracles, and thence deceive himself into a firm belief that he was divinely commissioned to liberate the Israelites. Thus, in the middle ages, those curious experiments, the principles of which are now well known, were thought to be the effects of magic; while the persons, who performed them, were supposed to be inchanters. Now, if Moses were so deceived by any extraordinary natural appearance while brooding over the depression of his people, he might forthwith imagine himself called to be their deliverer: and, as on this supposition, he would not be an enthusiast, he of course would not act like a person of that description, but would take all his measures with prudence and caution.

1. On this it may be remarked, in the first place, that it is almost impossible to conceive, how any man could be misled by a natural phenomenon into a belief that he was divinely commissioned, unless his mind were predisposed to such an idea by a strong tincture of enthusiasm. I say *any man*, that I may so include both the literate and the illiterate.

Now, with respect to the illiterate, no doubt an ignorant man might easily mistake a natural phenomenon for a miracle: but, in so doing, why should he deduce from it the inference, that *he himself* was called to be a prophet of God? What connection is there between such premises and such a conclu-

sion? We never find, that those in the middle ages, who made the mistake in question, did, on that account, fancy *themselves* to be divinely commissioned. They were apt indeed to mistake an experimental philosopher for a magician: but they never thought of attributing any such character to *themselves*, because they had seen or heard of certain wonderful experiments.

If this be the case in regard to the illiterate, still more must it be so in regard to the literate. A well-informed man, like Moses who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, would not lightly suppose a natural appearance to be a miracle: or, if from the difficulty of accounting for it he were led to adopt such an opinion, the question will still recur, why should he thence imagine that he was called to be a prophet? What phenomenon is there, which, however misapprehended as to its quality, could induce a man of letters to draw so preposterous and illogical a conclusion? If he did, his reasoning must inevitably have been to the following effect. *I behold a wonder, which I cannot account for* (such a wonder, we will suppose, as magnetism or electricity): *but, as I cannot account for it, it must needs be a miracle: and, if it be a miracle, it can only import, that I myself am divinely commissioned, with the power of working similar miracles, to liberate an oppressed nation from slavery.* Would a well educated and sensible man reason thus inconclusively; even if, from the defective knowledge of his age, he had been led too hastily to pronounce some remarkable

natural phenomenon to be a miracle? Yet in this very manner must the Hebrew lawgiver have reasoned, if he assumed the prophetic character in consequence of his misapprehending the quality of some natural phenomenon.

Hence it is plain, that no man, whether literate or illiterate, could thus have argued, unless his mind had been thus predisposed by enthusiasm. But it has been shewn, that Moses was not an enthusiast. Therefore Moses, even if he mistook a natural phenomenon for a miracle, could not possibly have reasoned from it in so strange and inconclusive a manner.

2. So much for the general bearings of the objection: it will be useful, in the second place, to consider the nature of that particular extraordinary appearance, which is stated to have been the cause of Moses taking upon himself the office of an inspired lawgiver and prophet.

While he was feeding the sheep of Jethro in the mountainous region of Horeb, his attention was suddenly arrested by a singular phenomenon. A woody thicket near him burst out into a flame; and, notwithstanding the fierceness of the blaze, it remained unconsumed.

Such was the portent itself; which is assigned as the reason, why Moses gave himself out to be a heaven-commissioned legislator. At its first appearance, he evidently deemed it nothing miraculous; for his language was merely that of inquisitive curiosity: *I will now turn aside and see this*

great sight, WHY the bush is not burned.' He probably, when we recollect that the wisdom of Egypt turned much upon physiology, might imagine the phenomenon to be something phosphorescent, or something of the nature of what is called *St. Elmo's fire*, or something closely allied to the *ignis fatuus*. It appears indeed, that, conversant as he had been with natural philosophy during his learned education at court, he was not a little surprised and perplexed with the extraordinary object before him; for he calls it *a GREAT sight*: but still he seems to have apprehended nothing properly miraculous; and, if the matter had rested here, when he found other solutions less satisfactory, he would most likely have had recourse to that usual salvo of the ancient naturalists, the occult properties of matter. What then induced him to think so differently upon the subject from what we may collect him to have done originally? He assures us, that he heard the voice of Jehovah calling to him from out of the midst of the burning bush: and he gives us at length the particulars of a conversation between the Divinity and himself, which afterwards induced him to assume the character of a special delegate from heaven. Nor is this all: he declares, that, in the course of that conversation, he witnessed two double miracles. At the divine command, he cast his rod upon the ground; and it became a serpent: he caught the serpent by the tail; and it reverted to its pristine form of a rod.

¹ Exod. iii. 3.

Again : he put his hand into his bosom ; and, when he drew it out, it was leprous : he put the leprous hand into his bosom ; and, when he drew it out, it was turned again as his other flesh.

Now what mere natural phenomenon could so deceive Moses, as to lead him to believe, that he had held a long conversation with a voice speaking out of the fiery thicket, that he had seen his rod experience a double metamorphosis, and that he had beheld his hand twice change its condition? If his belief rested upon no solid foundation; whence did it originate? From enthusiasm it could not : because it has been shewn, that he was not an enthusiast ; and because this part of the discussion proceeds altogether upon a different theory. Neither could it from any optical or auricular deception, with which modern physiology is acquainted ; provided Moses was in sound health both of mind and body. If it be urged, that the whole was an impudent falsehood from beginning to end : the ground of the argument is then manifestly changed ; and Moses, instead of being exhibited either as a dupe or as an enthusiast, is set forth as an artful impostor, a supposition, the propriety or impropriety of which will presently be discussed at large.

The only remaining shift, which I can imagine, is this : that Moses laboured under the one or the other of the two disorders, called *epilepsy* and *hallucination* ; whence, though he was not an enthusiast, the whole scene, which he has described with such particularity, might be presented so

forcibly to his imagination, that he fully believed himself to have conversed with the Deity and to have witnessed certain miraculous appearances.¹

III. Let us see then, by way of completing what has been said, how far this theory will untie the knot without the intervention of a Divinity : let us consider, *whether, even if such had been the character of the leader, even if Moses had been either an enthusiast or a dupe, he could have imparted the same character to his followers.* For let us remember, that the difficulty will not be solved by stopping short with Moses alone. If we determine him to be either a dupe or a fanatic; we shall still have to account for his success, both in persuading the Israelites to follow him, and in triumphantly conducting them from the house of bondage.

1. On this point it may be urged, that, as Theudas and other acknowledged fanatics had no difficulty in persuading great numbers to follow them, in expectation of seeing a miracle performed; why should it be thought incredible, that Moses might do the very same with the very same people?

To such an objection I would reply, that we may observe a striking difference between the Hebrew contemporaries of Moses and the Jewish contemporaries of Theudas, plainly arising from the dissimilar retrospective views which were severally presented to them.

¹ See a curious account of hallucination in Dr. Ferrier's *Theory of Apparitions*.

The Jewish contemporaries of Theudas looked back to the times ; when, as they learned from their sacred books, God was wont supernaturally to interpose in behalf of his people : and, from their experience that many prophecies had already been accomplished, and from their knowledge that Daniel's seventy weeks however computed must either have expired or must be on the point of expiring ; they daily expected with full confidence the manifestation of a Saviour, one of whose predicted characteristics is the working of miracles. Hence the recurrence of an age of wonders shocked not their belief : and hence, irritated as they were against the Romans, they lent a willing ear to every enthusiast or impostor, who claimed to be the anticipated Messiah, and who promised to give them the expected evidence of miracles if they would follow him into the wilderness.

Here then we have cause enough to account rationally for such an effect : but, if we turn to the Hebrew contemporaries of Moses, we shall both find them very differently circumstanced, and we shall perceive that they *immediately* required that evidence for which the credulity of the others was content to *wait*. When Moses first made his appearance among the Israelites in the character of a heaven-commissioned delegate, they had sojourned in the land of Egypt, if we reckon from the descent of Jacob and his family, two hundred and fifteen years. Now, during the whole of that time, they had been no more accustomed to miracles than we ourselves are : nor, if we except the

deluge, the confusion of tongues at Babel, and the supernatural destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, had they even any tradition of miracles properly so called. They had heard indeed of an extraordinary intercourse between God and certain of their ancestors, and they were not ignorant that some of their forefathers had uttered prophecies : but they had witnessed no such intercourse for more than two centuries ; and, whether the predictions were genuine or not, they had no opportunity of determining from the event. That prophecy, which most of all concerned them ; the declaration to Abraham, that *his seed should be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and should serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years :*¹ this prophecy, unlike Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, so far from predisposing them to listen to Moses, would obviously have a directly contrary effect. Not aware, that the four hundred years were to be reckoned from the birth of Isaac ; nor observing, that the prophecy treated of two particulars, the xenization of Abraham's seed in a foreign land, and their afflicting servitude to a strange nation : they would naturally conclude from a cursory inspection of it, that they were to be enslaved during the entire period of four centuries. Hence, as their actual servitude in Egypt could not then have continued much more than a century, and as the whole term of their national sojourning in Egypt had not then

¹ Gen. xv. 13.

exceeded two hundred and fifteen years: the most sanguine calculators would anticipate near two centuries more of slavery, while the dreary vista of three yet unexpired centuries of affliction would present itself to the eyes of the more desponding.¹ At all events therefore Moses, according to the apparently obvious interpretation of the prophecy, would seem to present himself as a deliverer far too early. The voice of God, consequently, would be judged to be against him: the ruling men of Israel would declare, that the time could not be yet come: and, so far from being enthusiastically disposed to follow him into the wilderness on *the promise only* of seeing a miracle; the nation, just like ourselves at the present day, would not stir a step, unless a claimant, who seemed to oppose an express prediction, gave immediate ocular testimony of his divine mission by performing a miracle on the spot. Of this disposition of his countrymen, so highly unfavourable to the views either of a dupe or of a fanatic, Moses himself was fully aware. *Behold*, says he, *they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.*² If then he himself were either a mere dupe or a mere enthusiast, how did he persuade this incredulous people to follow him? How did he induce them

¹ The four hundred and thirty years, mentioned Exod. xii. 40, 41, are to be reckoned from Abraham's departure from Haran, when the patriarch of the Israelites became a sojourner.

² Exod. iv. 1.

to receive him, as their prophet and their legislator?

2. The answer to this question immediately meets the objection, that Moses might have been deceived into a belief of his divine commission by the agency of an extraordinary disorder, which is known sometimes to present delusion to the mind with all the semblance of reality.

We are told, that, after the meeting of himself and his brother Aaron, they two went together, and declared the purpose of the Lord to all the elders of the children of Israel. What reception they met with, we are not positively informed: but, from what immediately follows, we may collect not equivocally, that the expectation of Moses was fully verified; their language seems to have been, *The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.* This very rational incredulity could be overcome by nothing save the evidence of miracles: for, without such evidence, how could they be certain, that he was not either an enthusiast or a dupe or an impostor? Accordingly we read, that the same miracles, which Moses had beheld in the wilderness; namely the twofold transmutation of his rod and his hand, together with an additional sign, that of changing the river-water into blood: that all these miracles were done openly in the sight of the people, and that in consequence of them the people believed and bowed their heads and worshipped.¹

¹ Compare Exod. iv. 1—9. with iv. 27—31.

Now, if we please ourselves with accounting for the miraculous interview in the desert by the theory of hallucination; how shall we account for that miraculous evidence of his divine legation, which Moses was enabled to afford to all the assembled people of Israel? That they were little inclined to credulity, their whole behaviour testifies: that they were convinced however of his being a divinely commissioned messenger, is certain: that they did not all hallucinate, may be fairly presumed and will probably not be asserted. They most assuredly must either have beheld the miracles, or they must have fancied that they beheld them. The former cannot be allowed, without allowing also that Moses was indeed the delegate of heaven: the latter cannot be maintained, without maintaining also that he was an impostor who contrived to deceive them by illusive appearances. But, if it be maintained that he was an impostor, the ground of the argument, as once before, is entirely shifted: and the inquiry, which such an assertion demands, must be prosecuted in its proper place. This at least is perfectly clear, that the same theory of hallucination will not account, *both* for the miracles which Moses professed himself to have beheld in the wilderness, and *likewise* for those identical miracles when repeated in the presence of all the people. It may also be briefly added at present: that, if we consent for a moment to shift the ground of the argument, and even if we freely concede that the miracles wrought before the Israelites might have

been performed by sleight of hand ; it must still be shewn, before the charge of artifice can be satisfactorily established, how either Moses himself, or the Hebrews, or the Egyptians, could be imposed upon by those tremendous visitations which at length compelled the obedience of the obstinately reluctant Pharaoh. The changing of a whole river into blood, the bringing on a preternatural darkness of three days continuance, and the sudden death of all the first-born of Egypt, were dreadful realities, which preclude all possibility either of hallucination or of imposture.

But I am trespassing upon a subject, which requires its own distinct consideration. Enough has been said to prove, that Moses was not himself deceived, when he assumed the functions of a prophet and a lawgiver.

CHAP. III.

THE EVIDENCE THAT MOSES WAS NOT AN
IMPOSTOR.

It shall next be tried, whether the Mosaical dispensation possesses the second mark of authenticity.

At present therefore we have to shew, that *Moses was not an artful impostor, and consequently that he had no intention to deceive others.*

The most convincing argument to prove, that this was not the case with Moses, is that which may be drawn from his conduct: for, in almost every respect, from first to last, it was directly opposite to that, which a person guided by mere human reason would have adopted. Hence, as an excellent modern writer well observes, if we exclude the idea of a divine interposition, it is impossible, on any rational principles, to account for the conduct of Moses.¹

¹ Graves's Lect. on the four last books of the Pent. part i. lect. 5. p. 129.

I. After his extraordinary preservation from death, we first become acquainted with him as the prime favourite and adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. In this capacity, he is brought up amidst all the luxury of a court, is carefully instituted in all the learning of the age, and is taught to anticipate with rational confidence the highest offices and the most commanding stations in the Egyptian monarchy.

Now after what manner would a person of bare secular wisdom; which must ever be the character of a mere impostor, as contradistinguished either from a mere enthusiast or from that not unusual compound an enthusiastic impostor: in what manner, I say, would a person of bare secular wisdom have acted, when placed by so rare a conjuncture in the very advantageous situation of Moses? He would plainly have affected great strangeness towards his brethren; because it were discreditable to have any close connection with a race of degraded slaves, because such a connection would have a direct tendency to thwart every ambitious project, and because it could in no respect serve to advance his interests. His feelings would have been those, which we so often perceive in operation, when a man of low origin has raised himself above the rest of his family, and when he has been thus brought to move in a higher sphere. In the presence of the haughty Egyptian nobles, he would have been ashamed of his extraction: he would have been unwilling to acknowledge it: he would have felt provoked, if it were ever alluded

to. In short, bent only upon his own aggrandizement, he would have sedulously improved his unusual good fortune; and, clearly perceiving in what line his preferment lay, he would in all things have industriously Egyptianized.

But in what manner *did* Moses act?

The apostle, with a single masterly touch of his pen, sets at once before us both his principles and his practice. Having learned from his pious ancestors the purpose of God respecting a Saviour who should be born from the house of Israel, and being fully assured that his people were under the care of a special providence, he chose rather to cast in his lot with them than to prosecute any tempting schemes of worldly ambition. *By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*¹

Accordingly, so far from shunning or being ashamed of his oppressed brethren, so far from dreading the reproach of being an Israelite by birth; he stepped forward, without very nicely weighing the probable consequences, as their vindicator and avenger. Roused to sudden indignation by the treatment which his countrymen experienced from the taskmasters, he attacked one

¹ Heb. xi. 24—26.

of those petty tyrants, and slew him. This rash action, which would naturally irritate the ruling powers against him, does not appear to have had any effect in conciliating the gratitude and affections of the Israelites. Attempting shortly after to reconcile two of his brethren, between whom a dispute had arisen, he was immediately reproached with the death of the Egyptian, and was tauntingly asked whence he derived his commission to become an arbitrator. The matter, thus being made public, soon came to the ears of the king; who, from the age of Moses at that time, was most probably the brother of his patroness. Doubly jealous of any semblance of lurking rebellion, from the circumstance of his being a conscious intruder; for the dynasty, which then filled the throne of Egypt, was the second dynasty of the foreign Huc-Sos or Shepherd-Kings: he determined to inflict upon the long cherished, and (as he deemed) traitorously ungrateful, Hebrew the punishment of well-merited death.¹ This fate he escaped, only by a precipitate flight into the wilderness: and thus, from giving way to a rash though generous impetuosity of temper, wholly dissimilar to the wariness and coolness and cunning of an artful impostor, who, intent upon accomplishing some great design, can smother his passions and bear an insult without testifying any signs of resentment; thus was he shut out from all his former connections, thus was he cut off from

¹ See my *Origin of Pagan Idol.* book vi. c. 5. § iv.

all human probability of ever becoming a distinguished character, and thus were instantaneously blasted all hopes of any future influence or preferment.

Conduct like this cannot be rationally viewed as the conduct of an impostor: no man, intent (we will say) upon raising himself to supreme power through the instrumentality of an Israelitish rebellion, would have acted so unguardedly, and unadvisedly. With such a project in his head, he would have sought indeed *privately* to conciliate the affection of his brethren, but *in public* he would have behaved himself strangely towards them. At all events, he would have been careful not to ruin every thing by any intemperate action, which might provoke the jealousy of the government, and which might effectually ruin his credit and interest at court. It is sufficiently plain therefore, that as yet he could neither have digested nor even have excogitated any serious plan of legislative imposture. Both his motives and his conduct seem to be altogether different from those of a Machiavellian politician. Hence most rationally observes the apostle, even putting inspiration out of the account; *By faith he forsook Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.*^a

II. But it may be said, with some shew of plausibility, that, while a successful courtier indeed, he entertained not the project of giving himself

^a Heb. xi. 27.

out to be a heaven-sent legislator ; and that the summary justice, which he inflicted upon the Egyptian, may easily be accounted for on the score of his being a man of a warm temper : it was in the silence and retirement of the wilderness, when all hopes of political advancement under the Egyptian monarchy were effectually annihilated by his own rashness, that he first struck out and matured the plan, which he afterwards so successfully executed.

Let us then follow him into the desert, and let us mark his conduct while in secluded obscurity.

An enterprising politician circumstanced like Moses, whom exile and disgust prompted to commence a legislative impostor, would doubtless contrive to keep up a regular correspondence with the leading men amongst those Israelites, upon whom at a fit season he designed that his machinations should operate. For this purpose he would hover upon the frontiers of Egypt ; he would labour to create an interest among the warlike tribes, which occupied the isthmian region ; he would form no connection, save what might further his design ; and, attentively observing the face of the political world, he would patiently watch the fittest season for putting his plan in execution. Having already felt by experience the evil consequences of precipitation, he would, on the one hand, guard against their recurrence, and would carefully refrain from marring his project by too hastily beginning his operations : but then, on the other hand, he would feel assured, that excessive procrasti-

nation would be equally fatal to his design ; because new interests would arise among the Israelites, a different generation would be rapidly springing up, his long-hesitating prudence would be mistaken for supine indifference, and he himself would be gradually forgotten. Hence, in order to make the attempt with any reasonable probability of success, he would be conscious, that he must not suffer many years of inaction and apparent quiescence to roll over his head.

Such would obviously be the line of conduct adopted by a politician : let us see, how far it corresponds with the occupations of the exiled Hebrew.

Plunging through fear into the deepest recesses of the wilderness, he commenced his novel mode of existence by encumbering himself with a wife. This however might be good or bad policy, according to the choice which he made. Doubtless then, as a wary statesman, he espoused the daughter of some warlike and restless chieftain ; by whose co-operation he might the more readily effect his purposes, and into whose dominions he might safely retreat with his followers. What was the fact ? The wife, whom he selected, was the child of a pacific priest, who dwelt in the wilderness, and whose influence was so small that he could not even secure his daughters from being insulted by the neighbouring herdsmen while they were watering their flocks. Nor was this all : the family of his consort was not only unable to give him the least assistance, but it would assuredly excite no small

prejudice against him among his brethren. Such, accordingly, proved to be the case: for his misalliance excited the mutinous indignation even of his nearest relatives. *Miriam and Aaron*, we read, *spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.*¹ His wife, it seems, was a descendant of the Hammonian house of Cush: and his brother and sister judged, that he ought rather to have espoused a daughter of his own nation. Now, if *their* prejudice was so strong on this account, we may be sure that the prejudice of *the people* would not be any weaker. Moses therefore, by so impolitic a step, incurred the danger of mortally offending his own nation without adding any thing to his external strength and security. Consequently, his very first action in the wilderness was any thing rather than the action of a sagacious statesman.²

Having made this false step however, in what manner did he seek to repair it? Truly he was content to dwell with the man his father-in-law; and, in the deepest seclusion of shapeless political indolence, he quietly tended his flocks in the re-

¹ Numb. xii. 1.

² While our second Charles was in exile, he entered into a negotiation of marriage with Mademoiselle de Monpensier. But why? He weighed the disadvantages of her religion against the advantages of her immense fortune: and, under the political impression that the latter would more promote his restoration than the former would impede it, he was induced to make his proposal. Here we perceive the conduct of a statesman.

cesses of the desert near Horeb the mount of God: Here forgetting and forgotten, apparently mindless alike of the past and the future, he wasted ingloriously, to speak with the feelings of a statesman, days of action which could never be recalled, until they amounted to the appalling sum of forty years. What rational hope of success could an impostor *now* have entertained? On ordinary human principles, the time was irrecoverably gone by: on ordinary human principles, as well might the Sardinian representative of the Stuarts look forward with confidence to the throne of Britain, as Moses expect to be hailed the governor and deliverer and legislator of Israel. This I say, merely so far as his own people is concerned: we have still to take into the account the political condition of Egypt. Now, at the period which Moses selected for the trial of his desperate experiment, there was no appearance of any weakness in the reigning dynasty. The king, who was his personal enemy, had indeed died: but there was no alteration in the jealous policy of the pastoral sovereigns. Their armed warriors still occupied the whole of Egypt: they employed their miserable slaves to build them strong-holds for their treasures: and thus the very labour of the Israelites, whose spirits were now effectually broken by the servility of more than eighty years, tended only the more completely to establish the domination of the warlike intruders. Yet this was the propitious moment chosen by Moses to effect the liberation of his brethren. At the head of a rabble of unarmed slaves, who had

long cowered beneath the aspect of their lordly masters, whose language uniformly betrayed the most despicable cowardice, who plainly entertained not a thought of manly self-vindication, and to whom he himself was scarcely more than a stranger ; at the head of this rabble, if Moses were a mere politician, he must have promised himself success against the numerous and disciplined and veteran troops of the eminently military Huc-Sos. Is such the conduct of a sagacious impostor? Rather is it, if we exclude the idea of a divine interposition, the fanaticism of an absolute madman.

III. The time of action being selected with whatever worldly prudence, let us observe the mode in which the Hebrew legislator carried on his operations.

1. I see only two ways, in which a mere politician could have attempted the liberation of the Israelites ; open violence, or court-intrigue. If he were sufficiently strong, he would resort to the former : if he felt himself weak, he would have recourse to the latter.

Moses did neither the one nor the other. Suddenly returning from the wilderness, he forthwith opened his alleged commission to the elders of the people : and then, without the slightest preparation, without any attempt to avail himself of a favourable opportunity, and without in the least degree softening the peremptoriness of his language ; attended only by his brother Aaron, he entered into the royal presence, and abruptly demanded of Pharaoh what he might be sure would be refused. *Thus*

*saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.**

The success of this uncourtly petition was such as might naturally have been expected: though, on any mere human principles of action, it is impossible to avoid being astonished at the strange imprudence of Moses and Aaron. *Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.*² All in short, that the king granted, was an increase, instead of a diminution, of hardships: as a punishment of the mutinous language with which he had been insulted; an additional burden was immediately imposed upon the Israelites. The whole of this is precisely what might have been anticipated from the wrath of a despot, to whom the unceremonious phraseology of peremptory demand was but little familiar. But in what manner did the affair terminate? The king, notwithstanding his absolute refusal, and notwithstanding the high indignation which he had manifested both against the petition and the petitioners, is at length brought to comply; and actually consents to the emigration of an immense body of useful slaves, the value of whose services had been practically felt by his dynasty for more than eighty years.

Here then we have a naked fact, *the exodus of Israel*, the occurrence of which is acknowledged on all hands. The only question therefore is, how we are to account for its occurrence? Whence hap-

¹ Exod. v. 1.

² Exod. v. 2.

pened it, that the king was at length induced to grant, what he had at first so indignantly refused, and what at the same time was so plainly contrary to his interest? On the supposition of Moses being a mere legislative impostor, let this fact be accounted for: a large body of unarmed and depressed slaves marched out of Egypt, directly against both the inclination and the interest of an arbitrary prince who was at the head of an attached and well disciplined army.

2. I am not aware, that any solution of the difficulty can be given on human principles, except this. It may be denied, that the narrative of Moses is accurate: and the opposing testimony of pagan historians may be adduced to invalidate his account. On their authority it may be urged, that the Israelites did not leave Egypt with a high hand contrary to the will of the king, but that they were driven out by force and were ignominiously banished as a race utterly abominable in the eyes of the whole nation.

Thus, according to Manetho, there was formerly a tribe of leprous shepherds in Egypt; who by extraction were foreigners, who rapidly increased from a small beginning to the number of eighty thousand, who were put to hard labour in the quarries on the eastern side of the Nile, who had a particular district assigned to them denominated *Auaris*, and who neither adored the gods of the country nor abstained from any of those animals which were accounted sacred. This pastoral race formed themselves into a commonwealth, under the authority of one Osarsiph, an

Heliopolitan priest of Osiris; who, when he became their legislator, changed his name, and thenceforth was called *Moses*. Proving however very dangerous to the Egyptian government, and having even succeeded in one of their grand revolutionary projects, they were at length forcibly expelled by Amenophis, who pursued them with his army to the borders of Syria.¹

Thus likewise, according to Lysimachus, while Bocchoris was king of Egypt, the nation of the Jews, being infected by an inveterate leprosy, fled to the temples, and begged for food. Many dying by reason of the disorder, a great famine took place. Upon this, the king consulted the oracle of Hammon; and was charged to purge the land and the temples from the unclean race, by which they had been polluted. He accordingly collected all the impure persons, and delivered them into the hands of the soldiers: who, in pursuance of his orders, attached plates of lead to the incurable lepers and drowned them in the sea; but drove out the others to perish in the wilderness. These last, taking counsel together, elected Moses to be their leader: and under his guidance, after suffering many hardships in the desert, they finally emerged from it, and seized upon the land of Judæa.²

Thus also, according to Diodorus, a pestilential disorder formerly prevailed in Egypt, which most were willing to ascribe to the wrath of the deity.

¹ Maneth. apud Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. § 15, 26, 27.

² Lysim. Ibid. lib. i. § 34.

For, when strangers from different quarters had intruded into the country who were each addicted to the rites of a foreign religion, the ancient worship of the native gods fell into discredit. Hence the aboriginal inhabitants began to suspect, that they should never be free from the malady until they expelled the aliens. Upon this, all the foreigners being compelled to leave the country, a very numerous division of them marched off into the district afterwards called *Judæa*. Of this colony one Moses was the leader.¹

Thus again, according to Tacitus, *most authors agree, that, a cutaneous disorder spreading through Egypt, king Bocchoris consulted the oracle of Hammon how to obtain relief: and the answer was, that he should purge his kingdom by expelling the Jews, who were a race of men hateful to the gods.*²

Thus finally, according to Justin, the Israelites during their abode in Egypt being infected by the leprosy, the inhabitants of the country were advised by an oracular response to expel them, together with their leader Moses, lest the infection should spread among themselves. The advice was followed: but the exiles, when they quitted the land, stole and carried off the sacred utensils of the Egyptians. These the natives sought to recover by force of arms; but they were compelled to return home by a violent tempest, which overtook them.³

¹ Diod. Bibl. Eclog. e lib. xl. p. 921, 922.

² Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 3.

³ Just. Hist. Phil. lib. xxxvi. c. 2.

Hence it appears from the general testimony of pagan writers, however they may differ from each other in minor particulars, that the Israelites did not quit Egypt in direct opposition to the will of its government, but that in truth they were forcibly ejected. Consequently, if the unanimous declarations of the gentile historians be attended to, rather than the solitary and unsupported narrative of Moses; it will not require the miraculous intervention of a deity to extricate the Israelites from their Egyptian thralldom.

3. This, if I mistake not, is the only solution of the difficulty, which can be given on mere human principles: we have now therefore to inquire, how far it is satisfactory.

The most ancient gentile historian, cited in opposition to Moses, is Manetho the Sebennyte, who was high-priest of Heliopolis during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus: he is an authority therefore, who flourished some twelve centuries after the exodus of Israel, in whatever manner that exodus may have been effected. All the other historians are subsequent to him: and *his* narrative is so evidently the prototype of *their* several narratives, that we may fairly resolve the whole account into his single testimony. Hence it appears, that the real state of the question is this. The Pentateuch, which (as we shall presently see) may be demonstrated to have been written in the age of Moses, asserts, that the Israelites quitted Egypt with a high hand and in direct opposition to the will of the reigning sovereign: Manetho, who flourished

twelve centuries after the event, declares, that they were violently driven out of the country; and his declaration, with the addition of certain other particulars, has been copied by various subsequent historians among the Gentiles. Which of the two is the most deserving of credit?

(1.) To this it may be replied, that Moses was an interested writer; who, wishing to magnify his assumed office, distorted a plain fact from the naked simplicity of truth, and adorned the early history of Israel with a series of specious miracles.

The answer to such an objection is not very difficult. If the Pentateuch were written either by Moses himself or in the age of Moses, it is utterly impossible that it could thus grossly have fabulized. For let us observe, what must have been the inevitable consequence of this procedure.

Moses comes to the Israelites, claiming to be a messenger sent from God: and it is an indisputable fact, that he has been received by them as such in all ages. Now, if either himself, or any contemporary who wrote under his sanction, had gravely inserted in the national history that account of the exodus, which now appears in the Pentateuch; and if, all the while, every individual Israelite knew, by the very testimony of his senses, that there was not a single syllable of truth in the whole account beyond the bare circumstance of the people having quitted Egypt: how is it possible, that a whole nation, with one consent, should agree to become such egregious dupes, as to receive a man in the capacity of an inspired legislator; when every

member of it had the most decisive *ocular* demonstration, that the pretended prophet was a liar of the most stupendous and unheard of impudence? If they admitted him to be a true prophet, they clearly could not *also* have admitted the narrative to be true: for the admission of the first were palpably destructive of the admission of the second. Yet, from generation to generation, they have alike admitted *each* proposition. They have pertinaciously maintained the divine legation of Moses: and they have no less pertinaciously received, as an authentic and inspired document, that volume; which, if the narrative of Manetho be deemed the true account of the exodus, must, to each contemporary of the prophet, have stood self-convicted of the most bare-faced falsehood. Hence, on the supposition that the Israelites were violently driven out of Egypt, it is manifest, that the Pentateuch could not have been written in the time of Moses, or, if then written, could not possibly have been received as authentic. To this result we shall find ourselves inevitably brought by adopting the narrative of Manetho. But it may easily be proved to be utterly impossible, both on every principle of moral evidence, and likewise from the very nature of things themselves, that the Pentateuch should have been the production of any age posterior to that of Moses; a question, which will presently in its due place be fully handled.¹ Hence we are compelled to ascribe it to the identical age of the

¹ See below chap. iv.

Hebrew lawgiver himself: and, if so, that very lawgiver, agreeably to the unanimous declaration of the Israelites, is the only person to whom we can rationally ascribe its composition. Let us then adopt the narrative of Manetho as the true history of the exodus; and we must prepare ourselves to believe, that Moses gave himself out to be an inspired messenger of heaven, that at the same time he wrote such an account of the exodus as every individual Israelite positively knew to be a tissue of gross falsehoods, and that nevertheless he persuaded both them and their children after them to receive himself as a true prophet and to recognize his composition as an authentic national history.

(2.) But we may do more, than argue *in favour* of the narrative contained in the Pentateuch: we may likewise argue *against* the narrative of Manetho and his copyists.

If it be contended, on the one hand, that Moses was an interested writer; it may quite as plausibly be contended, on the other hand, that Manetho was the same. It was at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus, a *foreign* sovereign of Egypt, that Manetho wrote his history, which he digested into three volumes. The first contained the eleven dynasties of the gods and the heroes: the second, eight dynasties: and the third, twelve. As for the period through which the whole extended, it comprized the modest sum total of 53,535 years. The authorities, upon which it rested, are no less unexceptionable, than the term which it occupied. Manetho, laudably ambitious of the praise of strict

authenticity, declares, that he wrote from certain documents, which were carefully laid up in the adyta of the Egyptian temples by Agathodemon or the second Hermes, the father of Tat. These documents were translated after the flood, that is to say, such of them as treated of antediluvian matters, into the Hellenic tongue; but they were written in hieroglyphical letters. Into the Hellenic tongue they were translated from the sacred dialect: and in the sacred dialect they were originally written by Thoyth or the first Hermes, who inscribed these precious historical notices, in hieroglyphic characters, upon certain pillars in the land of Seriad. On this solid foundation rests that narrative of the exodus, which the great Roman historian has condescended to copy, and which unfortunately contradicts the Mosaical narrative of the same event. Now, though Manetho's work undoubtedly contained some mixture of truth, as is evident from its recognizing the fact of the deluge and from its stating that the Israelites after having been employed as slaves finally emigrated from Egypt: still it is abundantly plain, that it was written with the interested view of magnifying his own country in the eyes of its Grecian sovereign. Hence we may account for the wonderful antiquity of the monarchy, which had subsisted for the space of 53,535 years: hence we may perceive the reason, why the history professes to be built upon regularly preserved archives: and hence we may clearly enough discern, why the Israelites, instead of being brought out of Egypt triumphantly with a

high hand and with a mighty arm, are said to have been violently ejected and to have been pursued as far as the borders of Syria.

So much for the motives, by which Manetho may well be supposed to have been actuated in the composition of his history: we may next observe the perfect facility, with which he might adduce it as a digest of authentic national documents. The inhabitants of Egypt were divided into castes, of which the sacerdotal and military were the two first. These kept in their hands all the power of the state, and the key of knowledge was in a special manner held by the priesthood. Meanwhile the people, as is ordinarily the case in bodies politic so constituted, were kept in the most complete ignorance and in a thorough dependence upon the higher orders. Under such circumstances, when more than twelve centuries had elapsed after the event, it was not very difficult for the priest of Heliopolis to give, from the sacred archives laid up in the temple and written in a character which none but his own fraternity understood, just such an account of the matter as he pleased: and we may be perfectly sure, that this account would be so dressed out as not to exhibit the Egyptians to their Greek sovereign as a race against which the vengeance of heaven had been peculiarly directed. In the execution of such a plan, he had nothing to fear either from detection or from contradiction. The people could not detect him, if they would: and his brethren, whose interests were the same as his own and who always acted together in a body,

would not contradict him, though they could. The story therefore might safely be told, in the days of Ptolemy Philadelphus, precisely in what manner best suited the views of the priesthood: and it clearly could not very well suit their views to represent the gods of Egypt, as vanquished in a contest with the God of Israel.

(S.) But, disguised and perverted as the story may be, we may still discover in it various relics of the truth: and, what is most eminently to our present purpose, we may distinctly perceive some vestiges even of the awful judgments themselves which visited the Egyptians. In noticing these, I shall of course avail myself of all the different gentile accounts which have come down to us; though I believe the history of Manetho to be the fountain, whence ultimately every other writer now extant drew his materials.

The common and industriously propagated notion, that the whole body of the Israelites were infected with leprosy; a notion, which bears upon the very face of it the stamp of incredibility: this notion seems to have arisen from a certain undoubted fact, which was perverted by hatred and exaggerated by malice, until it grew up to the full stature of the vulgar gentile account. Moses was actually struck with leprosy: ¹ and, as this circumstance must necessarily have been published by him to the Israelites, the Egyptians also would most probably come to the knowledge of it.

¹ Exod. iv. 6.

Hence originated the fable, that the leper Moses was the prince of an unclean race of lepers : and hence a plausible reason was furnished, why the people of the land should have wished for their expulsion.

Neither is the very story of the expulsion itself *altogether* void of foundation : it, in some sort, exhibits the truth ; but then it suppresses all those particulars, which *led* to a desire on the part of the inhabitants that the Israelites should evacuate Egypt. After the death of the first-born, Pharaoh charged Moses and Aaron with the whole body of the people instantaneously to depart : and, as for the Egyptians, we read, that they were urgent upon them that they might send them out of the land in haste ; so that at last they were even thrust out of Egypt and could not tarry.¹ But whence sprang this anxiety of the inhabitants to rid themselves of their obnoxious guests ? The tale of the leprosy, it seems, was not always told : either the truth, or something very like the truth, would at times start forth, even after a lapse of more than twelve centuries. As Diodorus relates the story, a pestilential disorder prevailed in Egypt, which most were willing to ascribe to the wrath of the deity. Hence the aboriginal inhabitants began to suspect, that they should never be free from the malady, until they had expelled those aliens who despised the ancient worship of their native gods. Upon this, a very numerous division of them,

¹ Exod. xii. 29—33, 39.

being required to leave the country, marched off, under the guidance of Moses, into the land which was afterwards called *Judæa*. Such an account of the exodus requires no comment: it is the scriptural history of the death of the first-born, scarcely altered or disguised.

According to the pagan writers however, the Egyptians not only expelled the Israelites, but they likewise pursued them with a mighty army as far as the borders of Syria. Here again we have an imperfect fragment of the truth, that identical particular which reflected so much discredit on the nation being the precise thing suppressed. Yet even this could not be altogether smothered. Trogus, of whose lost history Justin was the epitomizer, confesses, that the Egyptians pursued the Israelites in vain, and that they were compelled to return home by a violent tempest which overtook them. The nature of this tempest, and the extensive calamity which it produced, sufficiently appear from the remarkable tradition of the *Ichthyophagi*, which was in full vigour even so late as the time of Diodorus Siculus. This people, who dwelt on the shore of the Red Sea, asserted, on the authority of a narrative which they had uninterruptedly received from their ancestors, that the bottom of the gulph was once laid bare by the sudden retiring of the waters, and that they afterwards returned to their accustomed channel with an equally sudden revulsion.¹ Nor

¹ Diod. Bibl. lib. iii. p. 174.

is the tradition even yet extinct ; so deep was the impression made upon the original eye-witnesses by the terrible catastrophè. We are told by an authentic traveller, that to this day the inhabitants of the neighbourhood of Corondel preserve the remembrance of a mighty army having been formerly drowned in the bay, which Ptolemy calls *Chysma*.¹ It is evident, I think, from the account given by Lysimachus, that the Egyptian priesthood themselves, in the days of Manetho, were not ignorant of the awful judgment, which finally overtook Pharaoh and his host. The soldiers are said to have drowned in the sea such of the leprous Israelites as were incurable, while they drove out the others to perish in the wilderness. Here we have the acknowledged fact, that certain individuals perished in the sea at the period of the exodus ; and with it we have another acknowledged fact mentioned by Justin, that the Egyptian army was overtaken by a dreadful tempest : the question therefore is, when these two matters are put together, whether it be more probable, that the drowned persons were the Egyptians, or that they were some leprous Israelites whom in the very midst of the storm the soldiery were loading with plates of lead that they might the better submerge them beneath the waves.

Nay even the very authority, by which the Hebrews are said to have been expelled, may be adduced as a proof, that the truth was known, but

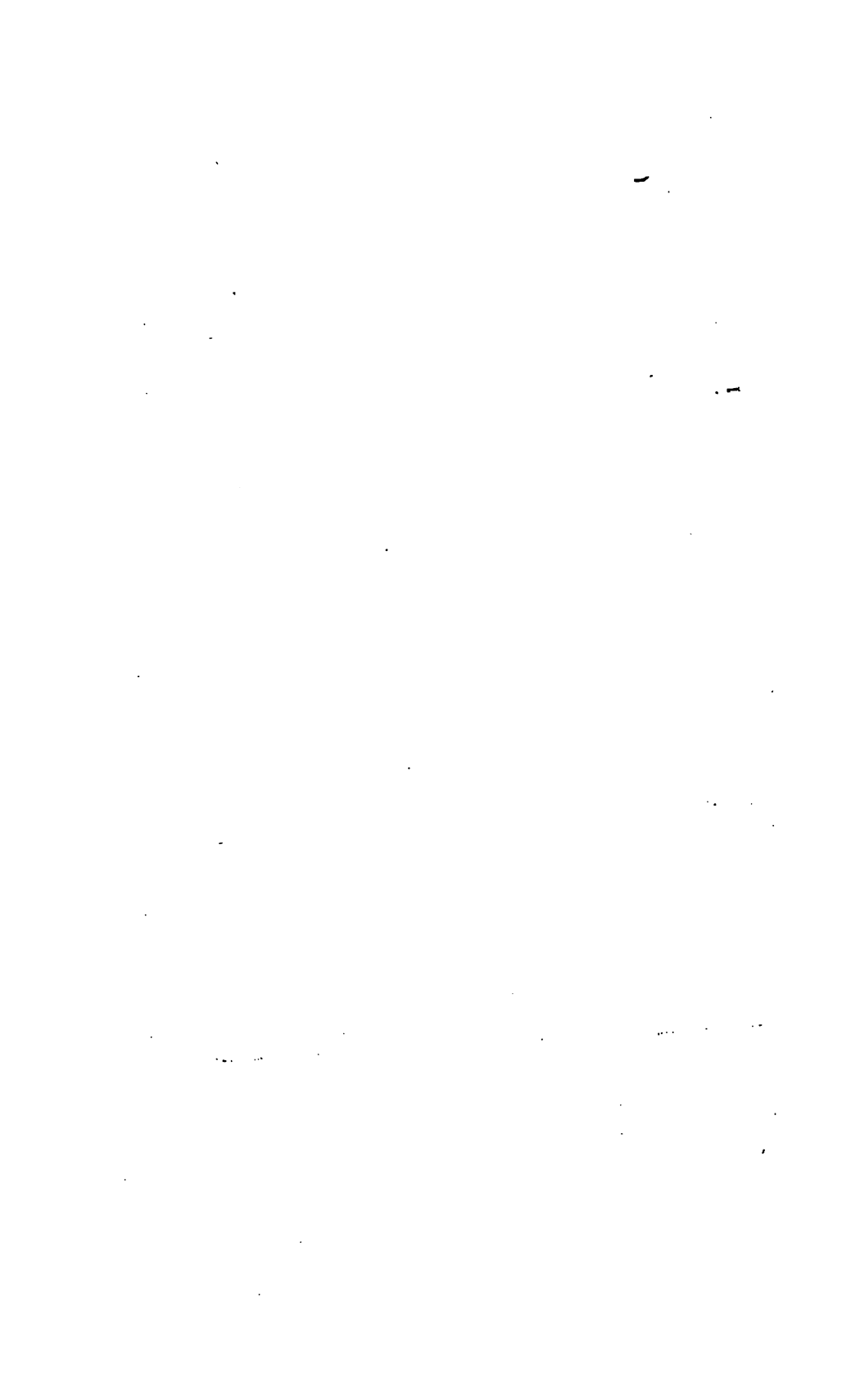
¹ Shaw's Travels, p. 349.

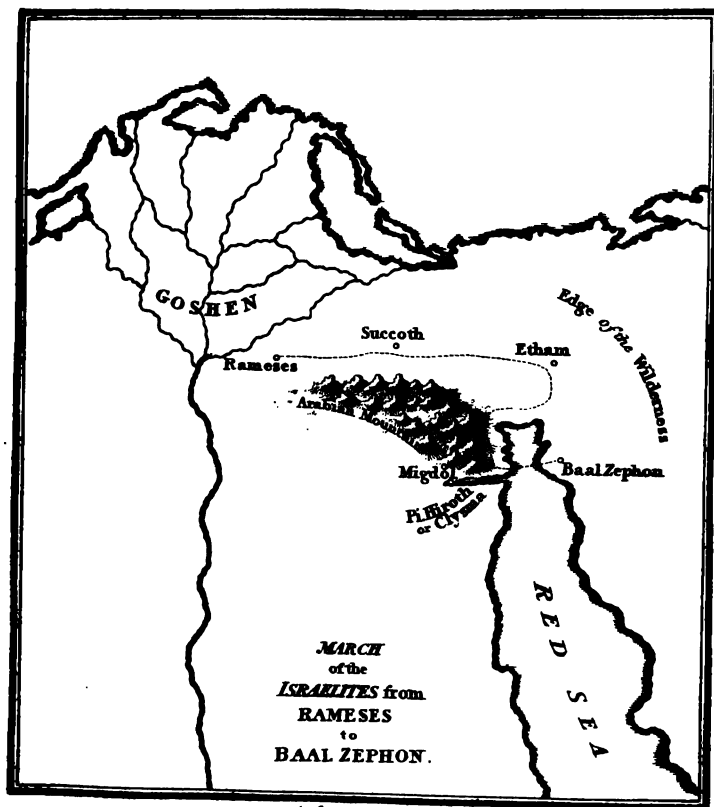
that it was designedly corrupted by the Egyptian priesthood. An oracular response, it is confessed, strictly enjoined the expulsion of the Israelites; and intimated, that, until that was accomplished, there would be no peace or security for Egypt. Now strip this allowed circumstance of its pagan adjuncts, that the response proceeded from the oracle of Hammon, and that the land was to be purged of the leprous Hebrews as of a race hateful to the gods; and we have nothing more than the identical fact declared in the Pentateuch: *thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel; Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.*¹ Here stands recorded that oracular response, which demanded the liberation of God's people, and which the Egyptian priesthood exhibited in their own way that so the fact of Israel's departure might be handsomely accounted for.

(4.) Thus do the tales even of Paganism itself tend ultimately to corroborate the Mosaical narrative: yet, from the truth more or less forcing its way out, they so differ from each other in subordinate particulars, which they all build upon the allowed fact of *the exodus*; that, upon no rational principles of evidence, can any one of them be safely received as an authentic history of that circumstance. With this view, it may not be useless to mark their variations.

According to Manetho, Lysimachus, Diodorus,

¹ Exod. v. 1.





Justin, and some of the authors consulted by Tacitus, the Israelites were *violently expelled*: but, according to other authors adduced by Tacitus, they were *not* expelled, but merely *emigrated*; and the reason assigned for their *voluntary emigration* is simply, that the vast population of Egypt exceeded its resources.¹ Nor is there a difference only with respect to the fact of *a violent expulsion* or *a voluntary emigration*: they, who concur in saying that the Israelites were violently expelled, cannot agree as to the grounds of their expulsion. With Manetho, the cause of it was their revolutionary temper and their having leagued themselves with the Shepherd-Kings. If we may credit Lysimachus and Trogus and some of the authors referred to by Tacitus, the reason of it was their leprous taint and their offensiveness to the gods. But, according to Diodorus, the ground of it was, not the leprosy of the *Israelites*, but a pestilential disorder, which cut off the *Egyptians*, and which they attributed to the wrath of the gods on account of their harbouring a race of aliens who despised the ancient worship. So again: Manetho tells us, that the victorious Amenophis first routed and then pursued them to the very confines of Syria; and Lysimachus says, that some of them were drowned in the Sea, while others were driven to perish in the wilderness: but Diodorus mentions no pursuit whatsoever; and Trogus, though he states that they were pursued on account of

¹ Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 2.

their having stolen the sacred utensils, acknowledges, that the Egyptians, so far from victoriously chasing them into Syria, were compelled to return home, being discomfited by a violent tempest.

Now, when opposed to the narrative of Moses, which they all more or less incidentally corroborate, what reliance can be placed upon writers, who thus perpetually contradict themselves, who had a motive to falsify the truth, and of whom the very earliest flourished more than twelve centuries after the event?

4. But, if we be compelled to adopt the narrative of Moses, so far as it relates to the emigration of Israel contrary to the will of the Egyptian government: and even from the pagan accounts it is difficult to believe the contrary; for, when the idle tale of the leprosy is exploded, it is not easy to imagine why the court should wish to banish a large body of subjects, whose laborious utility in the public works had confessedly been felt during many years: if, I say, we be thus far compelled to adopt the narrative of Moses; we then pledge ourselves rationally to account for a fact of this description.

The Hebrew legislator himself declares, that the finger of God was conspicuously and miraculously exerted throughout the whole affair. But, if it be contended that Moses was a mere self-commissioned lawgiver who affected a divine power which he did not possess, this solution of the knot must of course be relinquished. How then did he at length induce Pharaoh to consent to that, which

he had long so pertinaciously refused? Adequate force he possessed not, to compel assent; court-interest he had none after an exile of forty years, to conciliate it: accordingly, the narrative does not convict itself of falsehood by representing him to employ either the one or the other. He makes a simple and peremptory demand; which, in the first instance, Pharaoh just as peremptorily rejects. Yet, in the end, the king is obliged to submit; and Moses triumphantly carries his point.

If we exclude the intervention of divine agency, how shall we account either for his conduct or for his ultimate success? There seems to be a knot in the affair, which God alone can untie.

IV. The Israelites are now liberated from their Egyptian thralldom: let us attend their footsteps, and mark the conduct of their leader.

1. On quitting the land of Goshen, his obvious line of march was across the isthmus of Suez: and, when once that was passed, he had his choice of turning, either to the right into the desert, or to the left into Palestine. Each of these plans had its peculiar difficulties: and all, that a mere statesman could do, were to select the smaller evil.

Moses was at the head of six hundred thousand men, besides women and children: but this enormous host was an undisciplined rabble, utterly unfit for war, and completely dispirited by a long slavery. The land of Palestine was known to be a good country, and was very well adapted for the settlement of the people: but then all the

southern part of it was already occupied by a race distinguished for their military prowess, the warlike Philistine, who were the brethren of those formidable Palli or Shepherds that had so long trampled upon them in Egypt; and even the Canaanites, who were spread over the other districts, could not be expected tamely to resign their territories because they might be convenient to the Israelites. If Moses therefore had resolved to turn to the left, he must of course have anticipated an immediate war: and the result of the experiment it was not very difficult to foresee. Would it then be more eligible to turn to the right, and to advance into the great Arabian desert? If this plan were adopted, the question then would be, how such a multitude was to be fed. Moses himself well knew the country, by having resided in it for the space of forty years: he would know therefore the utter impracticability of supporting near two millions of human beings, even for a few weeks, in a region, thinly occupied by the wild Arabs, and capable of being traversed only by caravans. His choice, consequently, of difficulties was this: on the left, war without any reasonable hope of success; on the right, the certainty of perishing by famine.

Bad as the prospect was, there can be little doubt, I think, that a politician would have preferred fighting to starving: though it is altogether incomprehensible, on any human principles of action, how Moses could have entertained such a project as that of conducting the Israelites out of Egypt, without previously well considering whither

he would lead them. His determination however was made for the desert, on the sufficiently obvious ground, that, if he led them through the way of the land of the Philistines, they would repent when they saw war and would return to Egypt.¹

For this purpose, instead of directing their march towards the northern side of the isthmus, he proceeded along its southern side; and thence skirted what Herodotus calls *the Arabian mountain*, keeping it of course on his right hand.² His first encampment was at Succoth; and his next at Etham, which lay in the edge of the wilderness and nearly at the point of the western tongue of the Red Sea.³ Here, as he had determined for the desert, we might conclude, that he would advance with an inclination to the south-east. But, instead of this, when he was now free at least from all danger of being overtaken by the Egyptians, he adopted a movement even yet more extraordinary than any of his previous operations. So far from advancing by the route, which he himself had formerly taken when he fled from Pharaoh into the wilderness, he suddenly turned about; and, coasting the western side of the Red Sea, he encamped before Pi-Hahiroth between Migdol and the sea, over-against Baal-Zephon which lay on the opposite shore.⁴ The result of this movement was, that he ran into the very jaws of danger: for, by thus turning, he both gave the Egyptians an opportu-

¹ Exod. xiii. 17, 18.

² Herod. Hist. lib. ii. c. 5.

³ Exod. xii. 37. xiii. 20.

⁴ Exod. xiv. 2.

nity of overtaking him, and effectually precluded all human possibility of his own escape. His course, after this unaccountable turn, lay southward: so that, after he had quitted Etham, he continued to advance along a narrow plain, bounded by the Red Sea on the east and confined by the rugged Arabian mountain on the west. Here he was discovered by the Egyptians; who, like himself, immediately entered the same defile from the north, and who, from their knowledge of the country, felt now secure of their prey. Finding himself pursued, he pressed forward as far as the nature of the place allowed him to do: and this brought him to Pi-Hahiroth between Migdol and the sea, where he halted and encamped. The reason of his halting was, because it was locally impossible to advance any further. Pi-Hahiroth or the mouth of Hiroth, as its descriptive name sufficiently points out, can only be identified with a remarkable opening through the precipitous mountains, which runs westward from the sea into the interior of the country. It is at present dry, in consequence of the gradual recess of the waters; but it still bears decisive marks of having once been a creek or inlet of the sea. By Ptolemy and Antoninus, this mouth or aperture of Hiroth is denominated *Chysma*; by the Arabs, *al Kolsum*; and, by the modern natives of the country, *Bede* or *Bedeä*: words universally expressive of its having been anciently covered with water. Moses therefore, by bringing himself into such a situation, had the Red Sea on his left hand, the precipices

of the Arabian mountain on his right hand, and the inlet of Clysmia or Pi-Hahiroth directly in his front. Hence, as Josephus very accurately tells us, the Israelites were hemmed in on every side, by the sea, and by the mountains, and by the enemy in their rear. They were caught, as it were, in a net : they were driven forward, till they could advance no further ; and so were compelled to halt, though exposed to all the fury of an enraged enemy. Pharaoh, accordingly, is represented as saying of them, *They are intangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.*¹

2. Such then, as we find from comparing the narrative with the geography of the country, was the hopeful situation, into which Moses had brought the Israelites at their third encampment.

But what human politician, not altogether devoid of common sense, would have conducted them into this gratuitous difficulty ? Or, if such had been the unaccountable infatuation of the leader, where would he have found any followers ? In the vast multitude of the Israelites, there must have been some one, who was acquainted with the nature of the pass into which he was conducting them : or, at all events, every individual must have perceived the in-policy of turning back when once they had gained Etham and of afterwards pursuing a course which necessarily kept them on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea. How then can we account, either for the fatuity of Moses, or for the equal

¹ Exod. xiv. 3. See the annexed map.

fatuity of his numerous followers? Nobody in his senses would have brought himself into these difficulties, unless under the influence of a higher power: and nobody in his senses would have followed him into them, unless he had been fully impressed with a belief, no matter whether well or ill founded, that his leader acted by the immediate direction of heaven.

Moses therefore must either have been under the influence of a higher power; or he must have imagined, that such was the case.

Either of these suppositions, provided only that the people entertained the same opinion, will no doubt amply account for his conduct, in suddenly altering his line of march, and in advancing to Pi-Hahiroth. But, if we embrace the latter of them, though it will enable us with much facility to bring Moses to his encampment between Migdol and the sea; it will not quite so easily afford the means of extricating him from his Egyptian pursuers. His locality at Pi-Hahiroth was such from the very nature of the country, that he had but two methods of delivering himself from his enemies. He must either face about and conquer them in battle, or he must convey some two millions of followers across an arm of the sea without ships. In the latter part of the alternative indeed, he might freely choose, between the tongue of the Red Sea which at that place is about twelve miles broad, and between the inlet of Hiroth which is not of an equal breadth: for the nature of the mountain on the west is such, that it was impos-

sible for an armament to escape in that direction. Now, that he fought and routed the Egyptians, is not even so much as pretended: and yet, that he actually escaped into the desert which lies beyond the western tongue of the Red Sea, is acknowledged both by Lysimachus and (as we learn from Tacitus) by the general consent of those gentile writers who have treated of the exodus of Israel.¹

How then did he contrive to effect the passage of his enormous host over an arm of the Red Sea, while his enemies were hanging close upon his rear? The mere embarkation of troops in the face of a hostile army, even when every thing is prepared for the business, presents difficulties and dangers, which it requires much skill to surmount. But, in the present case, without any provision either of ships or rafts, Moses transports across an arm of the sea, under the very eye of the disciplined Egyptians, not a compact body of regular soldiers, but a mixed multitude of men and women and children with their flocks and with their herds. If then he were a mere legislative impostor, who claimed without possessing a supernatural commission from heaven, how are we to account, either for his march to Pi-Hahiroth, or for his conveying the Israelites across the Red Sea into the wilderness?

3. Omitting the former, some have wished to

¹ Lysim. apud Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. § 34. Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 3.

account for the latter on natural principles, by comparing the transit of the Israelites with the passage of Alexander along the sea-coast in Pamphylia. But we need only read Strabo's description of the pass, by which the Macedonian led his army, to be convinced of the utter futility of such a comparison.

*There is a mountain, says he, called Climax, which seems to hang over the Pamphylian sea: and, at the bottom upon the shore, it affords a narrow pass for travellers. This, in calm weather, is quite bare of water; so that people can easily go over it: but, when there is any swell of the sea, it is for the most part under water.*¹

We see then, that an army of Greeks was conducted, in calm weather, over a shore; which, except during a storm, was dry and passable: but this transaction bears not the slightest resemblance, in any one particular, to the transit of Israel.

If the top of the bay (for there only, according to the present theory, could have been the transit) was dry, by reason of a calm: how was a transit possible to the unwieldy host of the Israelites, and yet impossible to the disciplined and unincumbered Egyptians? If it was covered with water, by reason of a storm: how was a transit possible for either the one or the other? Now, wherever the transit was made, we are assured by Justin's authorities, that the Egyptians were compelled to return on account of a violent tempest. Such therefore being

¹ Strab. Geog. lib. xiv. p. 982.

the case, the sea cannot have receded in consequence of a calm. Hence, if we have no better mode of accounting for the transit than natural causes, we shall here find ourselves utterly at a loss: for the storm, which so grievously distressed the Egyptians, must have equally prevented the transit of the Israelites. Thus, even without disputing the propriety of the place fixed upon, let the weather have been fair or let it have been foul, the transit of the Israelites, and the inability of the Egyptians to follow them, clearly cannot be accounted for on the same principles as the march of Alexander through the Pamphylian pass.

The narrative of the transaction however, when geographically compared with the durable features of the country, fixes it indisputably, not to the top of the bay which answers in no one circumstance to the encampment of Israel by the inlet of Hiroth and over-against Baal-Zephon on the opposite side of the water, but to the point where the creek of Bede or Clysma (the manifest Pi-Hahiroth of Scripture) runs out from the Red Sea. Now in this place, where the transit must have been accomplished, the bay is twelve miles broad: and, in the time of Diodorus, it was three fathoms deep.*

I say nothing of the difficulties of the bottom, full of sea-weed and abounding with beds of sharp coral and madrapore, which evidently cut and broke the wheels of the Egyptian chariots: for, if Moses could manage to conduct two millions of followers

* Diod. Bibl. lib. iii. p. 173.

of all ages across an arm of the sea twelve miles broad and three fathoms deep, he would be little impeded by the minor obstacle of a rough bottom.¹ But this I say, that they, who deny the supernatural powers of Moses, stand pledged to account rationally and satisfactorily for the passage itself. Admit a Θεός εν μηχανῇ, call in the aid of a Divinity to untie the knot: and all is perfectly easy. We shall then readily account, both for the retrogradation from Etham, for the march to Pi-Hahiroth, for the transit of the Israelites, and for the discomfiture of the Egyptians. Moses readily obeyed the voice of Jehovah: the people, assured of his divine legation by the miracles which they had already witnessed, implicitly followed him into a dangerous defile: the sea opened a passage through its waters: and the ruggedness of the bottom lost its power of impeding or of injuring the feet of the heaven-conducted pilgrims.*

V. But, supposing that after some inexplicable manner the Hebrew lawgiver had extricated himself from his perilous situation and had safely escaped into the transmarine wilderness, how is he there to feed the vast multitude which he had led from Egypt? Can the most sagacious statesman furnish

¹ Pocock's Travels. p. 135, 141. *C'est le premier pas qui coûte*, observed the Frenchman upon hearing the story of the decapitated St. Denys walking a mile.

² In this account of the transit, I have followed Mr. Bryant's excellent elucidation of the subject. See his *Observ. on the plagues of Egypt*. p. 350—412.

a table in the desert? Can he give bread also? Can he provide flesh for his people? No prudent leader would have conducted the Israelites into a land, where, humanly speaking, they must inevitably perish by famine. Yet into such a land Moses *did* conduct his followers: and, what is still more extraordinary, they *did not* there perish by famine; for they afterwards emerged from the wilderness, and contrived to make themselves masters of the whole land of Palestine. *This* fact at least is indisputable, whatever might be the precise time of their abode in the desert. How are we to account for it by natural means? For it is obvious, that natural means alone can be resorted to by him, who denies the divine legation of Moses.

1. If it be doubted, whether the Israelites were at all in the wilderness; and if it be contended, that they marched straight from Egypt into Palestine: we have the testimony of the Pagans themselves to the contrary.

Lysimachus affirms, that they were driven into the desert for the express purpose of perishing there; so surely was destruction viewed as the natural consequence of such a banishment: Justin asserts, that they reached mount Sinai after suffering the pains of hunger for seven days in the Arabian wilderness: and the authors referred to by Tacitus unanimously agree, that they travelled through that same desolate region, where they well nigh perished by thirst and famine.

¹ Psalm lxxviii. 19, 20.

The fact therefore of *their having been in the wilderness* cannot be disputed without setting aside the testimony of those pagan writers, by which alone the testimony of Moses can be historically confronted. Hence the question still remains to be solved, *by what means they were fed in the desert.*

2. I see not what can be said on this subject, save that Moses grossly exaggerated, in declaring them to have wandered in that barren region for the space of forty years. To have continued there during such a period, without some miraculous supply of food, is plainly impossible: the necessary alternative therefore is evidently this; either they were so short a time in the wilderness that a miracle was superfluous, or they were so long a time there that a miracle was imperiously necessary. He, who rejects the divine legation of Moses, will of course find himself compelled to adopt the former part of the alternative. Let us consider, with what emolument such a theory can be advanced.

With respect to the fact itself, since it can be shewn (as we shall presently find) that the Pentateuch cannot have been written later than the age of Moses, we may reasonably begin with asking, how the Israelites could have been persuaded to receive and to hand down to their children, as an undoubted verity, an account of their having sojourned forty years in the desert, when every individual among them knew, that the story was a gross falsehood, and that they had simply marched

across it in their way to Palestine with all possible rapidity? But for the present let us waive this argument: and let us hear, by what expedients the Israelites may best be conducted from Baal-Zephon to the land of Canaan.

I am not able to determine, how long a time it might occupy a well appointed caravan to journey from Baal-Zephon to Palestine through the wilderness of Etham: but a mixed multitude, consisting of men and women and children, plainly could not travel with equal rapidity. So far as *food* was concerned, they certainly might subsist for a season upon the *very much cattle*, which they carried out with them: and this they evidently did; for, according to the scriptural account, they did not murmur for want of food until a month after they had quitted Goshen.¹ But the grand difficulty would be to supply such an armament with *water*, even during the most rapid march which they could accomplish, and even supposing that they encountered no obstacles on the way from the incursions of the active Arabians. This difficulty, according to Scripture, was experienced on the third day after the transit: and a miracle is brought in to obviate it.² But he, who rejects the divine legation of Moses, must supply this vast multitude with *water* by natural means. Something of the kind was accordingly attempted by the pagan writers, who could not allow the miracles of Moses without acknowledging the weakness of their own gods whom

¹ Exod. xvi. 1—3.

² Exod. xv. 25—24.

he directly opposed. This we may collect from those numerous authors, whom Tacitus professes to have consulted that so he might give the better account of the Israelites.

According to the general consent of these persons (the very earliest of whom flourished however, as we have already seen, full twelve centuries after the exodus), when king Bocchoris, by command of the oracle of Hammon, had driven them out into the wilderness; while the rest gave themselves up to tears and to all the torpidity of despair, Moses one of the exiles advised them to expect assistance neither from the gods nor from men: but he recommended to them, that they should trust themselves to him as to a celestial leader, by whose assistance they might escape from their present miseries. They assented; and, ignorant of all things, commenced their fortuitous journey. As might naturally be expected in the Arabian desert, they chiefly suffered from want of water: but by great good luck they were conducted by a drove of wild asses to a rock dark with foliage. Moses, conjecturing from the freshness of the grass that water might be found there, soon came to a copious supply by opening the veins of the latent fountains. Thus relieved, they proceeded upon their march which occupied a space of six days: and, on the seventh, they safely arrived in the land where they built their city and temple, the former occupants having been previously expelled by force of arms. This circumstance led to their consecration of the sabbath: and, while their numerous fasts served

to commemorate the severe famine which they had endured in the wilderness, the gratitude of Moses consecrated in the adytum of the temple the figure of the animal which had so happily conducted them to water.¹

In this account, we are obviously first led to doubt the possibility of such a mixed multitude as the Israelites being able to accomplish their march in six days. The distance from Baal-Zephon to the confines of Palestine is at least a hundred and fifty miles: and, though a caravan might possibly perform a journey of this length in six days, it is difficult to conceive how the blended armament of Israel could without a miracle be equally expeditious.² But what shall we say to the credibility of pagan historians, when we find them by no means unanimous respecting the line of march pursued by Moses? According to Trogus, the Israelites, after enduring hunger in the wilderness for seven days, reached, not the confines of Palestine, but mount Sinai in Arabia, near which Moses is truly enough said to have formerly lived.³ Here the people are described, as marching southward

¹ Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 3, 4.

² It may be said, that, according to the scriptural account, the Israelites marched from Goshen to Etham in two days, which is a distance of about ninety miles. True: but the same miraculous power, which prevented their feet from swelling in the wilderness, gave them strength to march both by day and by night. See Exod. xiii. 21, 22. This could not have been accomplished without a miracle.

³ Justin. Hist. lib. xxxvi. c. 2.

instead of northward, as plunging yet deeper into the recesses of the desert instead of seeking to extricate themselves from it. In this narrative, we perceive indeed an unguarded confession what was their real course; for the Israelites did actually travel to mount Sinai: but, if we exclude all idea of divine interposition, how shall we provide them with food and with water, during their long march first to mount Sinai and then from mount Sinai to Palestine? We may similarly observe a confession of the truth even in the story adopted by Tacitus. His writers had heard of Moses bringing water out of a rock to supply the necessities of the people: and upon this fact they have plainly enough engrafted the tale of the wild asses.

We are next equally led to doubt, whether any mere digging of wells in the soil of Arabia could have produced a sufficiency of water for so vast a multitude as that of the Israelites and their cattle. How enormous must have been the consumption of such an armament: and we are additionally to observe, that it was not enough for them to assuage their thirst upon the spot; they must have likewise carried with them in proper vessels an adequate supply, both for men and for beasts, during the remainder of the journey. The cattle indeed would daily diminish: but still, if they did not keep a proper number of them alive both by water and by pasturage, they themselves would be starved to death ere they could reach the end of their toilsome march.

There is yet another ground, on which we may

well doubt the possibility of such a journey being accomplished in such a time by such a multitude under such circumstances. It can scarcely be supposed, that, encumbered as they were with cattle and with baggage, they would not powerfully tempt the active cupidity of the marauders of the desert. We learn from the scriptural account that this was actually the case : for, in the intricacies of the wilderness, they are said to have been attacked by the Amalekites.¹ Nor can there be the least reason to doubt the accuracy of this statement : for, in fact, it were a palpable miracle for a host so circumstanced to have marched through the desert unmolested. Now, with this obstacle super-added to those which have already been stated, though more than one predatory attack might possibly have been repelled, it requires a strong faith in the accuracy of the gentile historians to believe, that a multitude, like that of the Israelites, could have safely marched through the wilderness to Palestine.

But such is by no means the only difficulty, which our faith in those historians has to encounter. We may lastly be allowed to doubt, supposing the journey to have been successfully accomplished, how far the Israelites, emaciated with famine, dispirited with hardships, totally unused to war, degraded by long servitude, and encumbered by women and children and cattle, would have been prepared to combat the warlike tribes which occu-

¹ Exod. xvii. 8.

pied the south of Palestine. It is not to be imagined, that these would tamely yield themselves a prey: and yet it cannot be denied, that the Israelites *did* make themselves masters of the whole land of Canaan. If then we adopt the narrative which Tacitus so incautiously or rather so contemptuously adopted, how shall we account for the final victories and settlement of these miserable half-starved exiles?

3. Perhaps it may be said, that there have been instances of long marches successfully accomplished by a whole nation, conquest attending their footsteps at the end of their journey: and perhaps the case of the Huc-Sos or Shepherd-Kings may be adduced as one very closely in point. These, at the close of a long march out of Asia, conquered the whole of Egypt: when they were first expelled from that country, they retired into the south of Palestine: and, when they a second time conquered it, they had to march once more over the same ground. Now, if *they* could accomplish such feats in the very range of country with which we are at present concerned, why not the Israelites?

The reply to this objection is not very difficult: for in truth the two cases resemble not each other in any one particular, save the national emigration of their respective subjects. As for the grand point where the main difficulty lies, they are perfectly dissimilar.

The Shepherds, quitting their original settlements in upper India, first descended through a good country into the fertile region of Baby-

lonia. Here they firmly established themselves, taking advantage of the weakness of the primeval Assyrian dynasty. After a season, a large branch of them emigrated westward: but they were too wise to cross the sandy desert, where they well knew it was impossible for them to subsist; on the contrary, they wound completely round it through a fertile country, until at length, having passed through Syria, they entered into Palestine from the north. This region, thinly occupied by the reguli of the Canaanites, they easily subjugated: and then, flushed with victory and accustomed to war, they advanced into Egypt, not by the way of the wilderness we may be sure, but by what Moses rightly calls *the near way of the land of the Philistim*.¹ Now they themselves were these identical Philistim or Palli or Shepherds, for such is the import of the title. Hence, instead of having to fight their way through that land, they in truth marched into Egypt, fully provided and appointed, from out of the very midst of their own settlements. Nor was this their only advantage: the same settlements served them to retreat upon, when they were expelled from Egypt; and, having here amply recruited their strength, they were thence again enabled to invade and subdue that country a second time.²

But the Israelites had no such advantages. They were wholly unused to war; they were dispirited by slavery; they quitted Egypt at

¹ Exod. xiii. 17.

² See my Orig. of Pagan Idol. book vi. c. 5. § 14, v.

a moment's warning and without any preparation for their march ;¹ they retreated, as it is universally confessed, through the wilderness, where, according to the pagan writers, they nearly perished by thirst and famine ; and, when at length they emerged into a better country, they had no friends ready to receive them but a hostile population fully prepared to oppose their entrance.

Thus palpably unlike, in every leading feature, are the two national emigrations of the Huc-Sos and of the Israelites.

4. Before the present topic be dismissed, I shall make a few more observations on the narrative, which, according to Tacitus, was most generally received among the Pagans.

(1.) This narrative acknowledges, that, with whatever reason, Moses was followed by the Israelites *as a leader sent from heaven*.

Now, if they experienced no sort of extraordinary assistance from him in their distress, how came they to view him as sustaining a miraculous character? Men, who were confessedly perishing with hunger and thirst, would be little disposed to admit such a claim, unless their sufferings were instantaneously relieved : on the contrary, the mere urging of it under these circumstances, while no supernatural benefit was received, would be viewed only as ill-timed mockery, and would produce no other feelings than those of extreme irritation. If then Moses relieved their thirst simply by following

¹ Exod. xii. 39.

a drove of wild asses to a place where water was found, and if he relieved their hunger only by advising them to slay their cattle : it is not easy to conceive, why on *this* account they should be fully persuaded that he was *a celestial leader*. Nor can it be said, that such a notion was only of after-growth among their grateful posterity : according to the authorities from which Tacitus professes to borrow his narrative, *the identical Israelites in the wilderness* were the persons who ascribed this character to Moses.

If it be replied, that Tacitus describes Moses as claiming the character, not on the score of miracles performed in the desert, but on the ground of the people having already received assistance from him ; this will in no respect serve to mend the matter : for, in the first place, what was that extraordinary assistance which could have induced them so readily to hearken to him ; and, in the second place, would they not soon have been convinced of their hasty credulity, if they had found that their heaven-sent guide could relieve them only by natural means ?¹

It will not here be sufficient to answer, that Moses, by pretended oracles and by spurious miracles, might have imposed upon them ; as the

¹ Sic conquisitum collectumque vulgus, postquam vastis locis relictum sit ; ceteris per lachrymas torpentibus, Mosen unum exsulum monuisse, ne quam deorum hominumve opem expectarent utrimque deserti, sed sibimet ut duci cœlesti crederent, primo cujus auxilio credentes, præsentis miseriae pepulissent. Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 3.

priests of the wandering Palli or Pelasgi were accustomed to delude their followers by the simulated vaticinations of their ark-god : no imposture could have produced meat and drink in the wilderness, and with any other less effectual wonder the fasting Israelites would have been little disposed to rest satisfied. A craving stomach is not easily deceived : and the clamorous impatience of the people for food, duly recorded by Moses, shews, both how ill-contented they were with his *former assistance* of whatsoever nature, and how for some reason or other they had prepared themselves to expect that he *could* relieve their necessities. Now why should they entertain any such fond expectation ; unless they had believed, as we learn from the authorities of Tacitus that they actually *did* believe, that he was *a celestial leader* ? And why should they believe him to be *a celestial leader* on the score of some *former assistance* which he had rendered them, if there were nothing apparently superhuman in that assistance ? If then Moses urged their obedience to him in the wilderness on the special ground of his being *a celestial leader*, they would immediately demand from him a supply of food ; which, accordingly, we find from the scriptural history to have been the case : and, if he had been quite unable to comply with their demand, or if he had given them water only in the manner recorded by Tacitus ; they would forthwith have ridiculed his pretensions, and would have discarded him as a self-convicted impostor. I see not, how this conclusion can possibly be avoided.

(2.) The true origin of the tale recorded by Tacitus is sufficiently plain; it is built upon the striking of the rock and the bringing forth an exuberant supply of water: but whence had he the legend of the wild-asses, and where did he discover the worship of an animal of that species in the adytum of the temple at Jerusalem?

Scarcely has he indulged us with this notable story, when he directly contradicts himself by another account strictly consonant with the truth. *The Jews*, says he, *unlike the Egyptians who venerate both animals and compound images, believe only in one God, and worship him intellectually, considering those as profane who represent him by any material figures; inasmuch as he is a being, supreme and eternal, immutable and imperishable. Hence there are no images either in their cities or in their temples.*¹ Nor does he contradict himself once only: in the course of a very few pages he informs us, that *Pompey was the first Roman, who subdued the Jews, and who claiming the right of a conqueror entered into the temple. Hence a report was spread abroad, that the sanctuary was found ENTIRELY EMPTY AND WITHOUT ANY IMAGE OF THE GODS.*² Nay, he even tells us,

¹ Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 5.

² Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 9. In this assertion, the Roman historian is perfectly accurate: for, as it may be inferred from the writings of Philo and Josephus, the sanctuary of the second temple was literally empty; the use of the cherubic emblems, which formed so conspicuous a part of the furniture of the first, having been totally discontinued after the return

that, rather than they would submit to place a statue of Cesar in the temple, they took up arms.¹

What has now become of that asinine image ; which, with so much confidence he recently assured us, they consecrated in the very adytum of the temple or (to adopt the phraseology of the Hebrews) in the holy of holies ? Truly the authorities, upon which this great historian was content to build his strange account of the Jews, are well deserving of our serious attention : whether we consider their unbending regard to veracity ; or whether we bear in mind their remote antiquity, an antiquity which soars even to the age of Ptolemy Philadelphus !

As for the asinine image, it plainly originated from the sordid idolatry of Egypt ; which those ignorant or prejudiced writers, consulted by Tacitus, have erroneously ascribed to the Israelites. An ass was the symbol of Seth or Typhon : and, as it was the sacred animal which had assisted the hero-gods in their fabled war with the giants, it was both elevated to the sphere, and was used on earth as the most proper vehicle of the holy toys employed in the Mysteries.² The same calumny was, in a subsequent age, retailed by Celsus and the Gnostics. One of the seven regents of the spheres, whom those paganizing heretics denominated *Sa-*

from the Babylonian captivity. See Lord Presid. Forbes's Works. vol. i. p. 190.

¹ Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 9.

² See a copious discussion of the ancient pagan Onolatry in Bryant's Observ. p. 3—79.

baath, and whom they conceived to be the god of the Jews and the malignant creator of the material world, was said to have had the face of an ass : and this mishapen deity, whose prototype is evidently the consecrated ass mentioned by Tacitus, was fabled by them, to have appeared in the sanctuary to Zechariah the father of John the Baptist, and to have been eventually the cause of his death.¹

VI. At mount Sinai, the Israelites received that Law, which is still extant, and which from

¹ Orig. cont. Cels. lib. vi. The story is thus told at large by Epiphanius. *Infinite in number are the lies broached by the Gnostics. To give a single instance among many others, they produce the following narrative, to account for the death of Zechariah in the temple. A phantom appeared to him ; and deprived him of the power of speech, finding that through fear he was about to describe his form to the people. For he had seen, say they, at the hour of incense, a man standing in the figure of an ass ; and, when he wished to go out, and proclaim to the Jews the baseness of their idolatry in paying religious adoration to such a being, he was struck dumb by the apparition. Afterwards, when his speech was restored to him, he revealed the whole affair, and was thence slain by the enraged populace. Such, according to them, was the occasion of the death of Zechariah : and they add, that on this account Moses commanded the High-Priest to wear bells upon his garment, that, as often as he entered into the holy of holies by virtue of his office, the deity, whom they worshipped, hearing the sound of the bells, might have time to withdraw, lest the contemptibleness of his figure should be detected.* Epiph. adv. Hær. lib. i. Croius idly supposes, that this notion arose out of a perversion of Christ's riding into Jerusalem upon an ass. Spec. Conject. in Orig. Iren. It plainly existed before the birth of our Saviour, for Tacitus found it in the authors whom he consulted upon Jewish affairs.

age to age they have held in the highest veneration though they were not always obedient to its precepts. Now the very extraordinary sanctions of that Law do themselves furnish a standing and decisive evidence, that Moses could not have been an impostor: for no impostor would have dared to publish a Law with sanctions, which in a short time must have convicted him of falsehood by their total or partial failure of effect.

1. The legislator of Israel ventures to lay it down as a first principle, that the political constitution of his people was a Theocracy. Hence he stood necessitated to make temporal rewards and punishments the sanction of his Law. For, if the Supreme Being were introduced as avowedly discharging the functions of an earthly sovereign; that is to say, if he were exhibited as being *the king* no less than *the God* of Israel: there would be a manifest inconsistency in his declared character, unless he wielded the sword of justice after the very same manner that it is wielded by a mortal potentate. Such being the case, Moses, having asserted the national polity to be theocratic, asserted at the same time with strict consistency, that temporal rewards and punishments constituted the sanction of the Hebrew Law.

Now, in all ordinary cases, these punishments were dispensed by the viceregal or inferior civil magistrate, just as they are similarly dispensed under any other form of government; since it were nugatory to call in the gratuitous interference of the Divinity, where circumstances rendered it

plainly superfluous. But there are many cases both of a private and of a public nature, which the arm of no mere human magistrate can reach : for an individual may escape detection ; and, if a whole nation rebelliously sets the laws at defiance, what magistrate has the physical power of coercion ? Nor is this the only defect in human governments. We are apt familiarly to say, that rewards and punishments are the two hinges, upon which all such governments turn : and this doctrine has been assumed, as an undoubted truth, in every Utopian fable which has been written on the subject. But, in reality, *rewards* neither have been, nor are, nor can be, the sanction of any government of mere human institution : *punishments*, in truth, are the sole sanction of all such governments. If we descend to naked facts, transgressors of the law are indeed duly *punished* : but who ever heard of a man being *rewarded* for simple obedience to the law ? The thing is physically impossible : for whence are the rewards to come, save by a tax upon the community ; and, if so, how can any state undertake to reward each member, who abstains from murder, theft, rapine, and the like ? These are the necessary defects of every mere human government : and thus partial is even the very principle, on which every mere human government must of necessity be administered.¹

If we suppose then a Theocracy to have ever really existed ; it *must*, from the very perfection of

¹ See Warburton's Div. Leg. book i. sect. 2.

its nature *as* a Theocracy, be free from these defects both in principle and in practice : that is to say, the omnipotent arm of the divine magistrate must be alike equal, to punish the guilty whether they be individuals or the state at large, and to reward the meritorious whether their obedience be private or public. Now to assert, that God can do all this in a *future* world, is speaking quite beside the mark : for, if he ever condescended to be the temporal head of a theocratic constitution, his dispensing of rewards and punishments must needs take place in this *present* world ; because in no other manner is it possible for a Theocracy to exist at all : unless it dispense rewards and punishments *here*, it is *not* a theocracy.

In strict accordance then with the assertion of Moses, that the political constitution of Israel was a Theocracy ; it is likewise asserted by him, that every law, whether of a religious or of a civil nature (for, in a Theocracy, Church and State are inseparably blended together), rested upon a temporal sanction : that is to say, it is asserted by him, that each violation of the Law should be punished *here*, while a steadfast observance of it should be rewarded *here*.

Now it is abundantly clear, that nothing of this sort could actually take place without the perpetual intervention of an equal superintending Providence : for many crimes, both private and public, would escape the cognizance of the most active human magistrate ; and, as for his pretending to *reward* consistent obedience to the laws, this, we have

seen, is utterly beyond his power. Much more would such be the case, if he attempted to animadvert upon or to recompense actions of a religious, as well as of a civil, nature. We, who live under an unequal Providence, know full well, that in this world the wicked frequently enjoy great prosperity, while the pious are subjected to pain and affliction and losses and poverty : and we know at the same time, that no human magistrate, though he may be armed even with the plenary authority of the state, is able to rectify this disordered condition of circumstances. If the knot is to be untied *here* ; a divine hand is alone equal to the task. In other words, an equal Providence on this side of the grave must needs be an extraordinary Providence : and an extraordinary Providence is equivalent to a miraculously-exerted Providence.

Such however is the identical Providence, which enters essentially into the idea of a Theocracy : and such, accordingly, is the identical Providence, which Moses ventures to promise to the Israelites, when he makes temporal rewards and punishments the sanction of his Law. Their proper part was assigned to subordinate human magistrates ; who, like magistrates in any other body politic, were to enforce the statutes with civil pains and penalties, so far as they were *able* : but the necessary defect of their administration was to be supplied by the immediate and perpetual interference of the divine governor. The obedience of individuals was to be uniformly rewarded by temporal prosperity : the

disobedience of individuals was to be no less uniformly punished by temporal sickness and distress. From individuals the sanction is extended to the republic itself. If the state faithfully observed the Law, it should be always prosperous and triumphant: if it apostatised from the Law, it should never fail to taste the bad effects of its disobedience in unproductive seasons and in the pestilence and in subjugation to its enemies.¹

This then being the avowed sanction of the Law; it is plainly built upon a sanction, which no mere human legislator could enforce, and which consequently no impostor would have appointed. For the recorded promises and threatenings were either made good, or they were not made good. If they *were* uniformly made good; this could not have happened without the actual existence of that very Theocracy, upon which Moses professes to build his Law: and, if such a Theocracy actually existed and was in constant operation, then Moses must have been a heaven-inspired legislator. If they *were not* uniformly made good; Moses must, in a very few years, have stood convicted of palpable imposture: and, if such had been the case, the republic which he founded must soon have fallen to pieces; for its laws would be peculiarly liable to contempt above all other laws, because the glaring imposture of their author had been openly detected by the event. One part or other of this alternative is inevitable from the bare con-

¹ See Deut. xxviii—xxx.

struction of the Mosaical Institutes, as we may read them even now with our own eyes. But the Israelites, at no one period of their history, however they might transgress the Law, just as Christians may transgress the precepts of the Gospel, ever pretended to say, that its promises and its threatenings were not uniformly made good. Hence, in the midst of their very worst apostasies, they never pretended to deny the divine authority of Moses. If however this *could* have been done with any plausibility, we may be morally sure that it *would* have been done : because such a denial, upon grounds which could not be controverted, namely that *the promises and the threatenings of the Law were proved by actual experience to be equally futile*, were the best possible vindication of their apostatising to the worship of other gods. An argument indeed of this nature is so obvious, that, even if the Israelites had not adduced it as an apology for their conduct, we cannot doubt that it would have been speedily adduced by the priests of the Baalim. But nothing of the sort appears. The divine authority of the Law is never once disputed ; which it inevitably must have been, if its promises and its threats had been found by the sure test of experience to be quite fallacious. Therefore those promises and those threats must have been duly made good. But, if they were duly made good : then the Israelites *must* have lived under the extraordinary Providence of a Theocracy. Whence it will ultimately follow, if the Israelites *did* live under the extraordinary Pro-

vidence of a Theocracy ; since no mere human legislator can command through a series of ages a long course of contingent events, that Moses, who *did* command such contingent events, must have been an inspired legislator.¹

2. The only reply, so far as I can judge, which can be made to the preceding argument, is this : that, by universal acknowledgement, the extraordinary Providence of the Theocracy operated no longer after the Babylonian captivity ; and yet the Jews ceased not, on that account to regard their Law as sent down from heaven. But, if the non-existence of an extraordinary Providence *after* the Babylonian captivity did not shake the faith of the Jews, why should its non-existence *before* the Babylonian captivity be attended by any different effect ?

¹ The intelligent reader will easily perceive, wherein this argument differs from the celebrated one of Bp. Warburton. His Lordship's argument requires the admission, that the ancient Israelites were *ignorant* of a future state of rewards and punishments : for, if they were *not ignorant* of it, that state would certainly be a *tacit* and *implied* sanction of at least the moral Law, notwithstanding the existence of the *additional* sanction of an equal Providence. My argument, on the contrary, is equally valid, whatever may have been the national belief of the early Israelites as to a future state. Agreeably to this statement, the bishop contends, as his argument required him to do, not only that temporal rewards and punishments were the avowed sanction of the Law ; but likewise that Moses did not teach a future state, and that the people were consequently ignorant of it. See Div. Leg. vol. v. p. 174, 175, 182, 196. vol. vi. p. 106, 132, 133, 233. Without the existence of such ignorance indeed, the three first books of the Divine Legation are wholly foreign to his argument.

To this objection it is not very difficult to give a satisfactory answer. So far from invalidating the argument, it serves in reality to strengthen it.

Had the futility of the legislative threats and promises been, *from the very first*, demonstrated by the event; infidelity, on the part of the Israelites, must have been the inevitable consequence. But, when their punctual accomplishment had been uniformly proved, during the lapse of almost nine centuries, from the delivery of the Law to the Babylonian captivity; the cessation of the extraordinary Providence might indeed excite the wondering speculation of the Jews as to its probable cause; but it would not lead them to doubt the divine inspiration of their Law, which had already been demonstrated by the sure test of long actual experience. Hence it is evident, that the unshaken faith of the later Jews, from the Babylonian captivity down to the present time, can only be accounted for on the ground of their full conviction, that an extraordinary Providence had operated for the space of almost nine centuries, though through the inscrutable wisdom of God it had subsequently been withdrawn.

Thus it appears, that the very faith of the Jews *after* the Babylonian captivity requires and supposes the operation of an extraordinary Providence *before* it. Had no such extraordinary Providence been *previously* in operation, the ancient Israelites must have been universally infected with infidelity: and the necessary consequence would have been the total abrogation and even oblivion of the Mo-

saical Institutes. But, if, without the constant operation of such an extraordinary Providence; this must inevitably have been the case with the ancient Israelites : how shall we account for the singular fact, that the later Jews devoutly believed what their immediate predecessors must have constantly disbelieved ; and that, with a direct proof of imposture before their very eyes, they returned to a Law, which those predecessors must have abrogated at least, if not absolutely lost, from a full conviction of its false claims to inspiration ?

3. Some of those speculations, which naturally arose in the minds of the Jews when they found that an extraordinary Providence operated no longer, may yet be traced in the Hebrew Scriptures.

If we ascribe the seventy third Psalm to Asaph or David ; it will prove, that that dispensation, so far as *individuals* were concerned, was then beginning to be withdrawn : or, if we rather choose to give it to some later Asaph or to a writer after the captivity who inscribes it to the memory of David's friend ; it will equally prove the cessation of an extraordinary Providence. In either case, the whole turn of the composition hinges upon the acknowledged circumstance, that such a Providence had once operated : for deny the circumstance, and it is inconceivable upon what principles the ode could have been written. No one, in the present day, would express any violent astonishment at the frequent success of the wicked

and at the frequent depression of the good : on the contrary, we behold it, without the least surprise, and without the least consequent temptation to doubt of God's moral government. It seems probable, that, so far as *individuals* were concerned, an extraordinary Providence was beginning to be withdrawn in the time of David ; but, so far as *the public* was concerned, the history of Israel testifies it to have existed in full force down to the Babylonian captivity. However this may be, the seventy third psalm is a standing proof that it *once* operated : for no man could have written that psalm, except a person who was perplexed with a nascent infidelity on account of a once familiar circumstance having begun to cease. The author evidently speaks, as grievously disturbed with a matter which seemed to shake the foundations of the Law : because, in opposition to its threats and its promises, he had been reluctantly compelled to observe the prosperity of the wicked and the troubles of the righteous.

VII. When a political impostor writes a narrative of events, we may be sure that he will suppress every thing disgraceful either to himself or to his people : to himself, because it would detract from his influence ; to his people, because he would be unwilling to run the risque of irritating them superfluously. Nay, even if a subsequent historian have occasion to exhibit his countrymen in the best point of view ; without precisely ad-ducing a direct falsehood, he will be strongly

tempted either to soften or to pass over any less reputable circumstances. This temper is inherent in human nature: for, neither from policy nor from inclination, does any man much affect to be the herald either of his own shame or of his country's dishonour.

The present argument in favour of the sincerity of Moses will be most forcibly exhibited, by contrasting *his* mode of writing history with that adopted by the sagacious courtier Josephus.

Respecting the private life of Moses until he appears as the prophet of God, nothing is mentioned in the book of Exodus save what was absolutely required by the narrative: and the whole account of him during his first eighty years is so brief, that it is comprized in a single chapter. Josephus, on the contrary, works up the supposed events of this period into a complete romance, of which Moses is throughout exhibited as the regular hero.¹

In the scriptural account, Moses, when supernaturally called from the bush, shews so strong a reluctance to take upon him the office of God's ambassador, that the anger of the Lord is said to have been at length kindled against him. Josephus softens the whole into a modest apology for his natural incapacity: and even this is represented as having been made prior to the miracles, which he saw and which he was enabled to perform;

¹ Joseph. Ant. Jud. lib. ii. c. 10, 11.

while not a word is said of God's anger having been kindled against him or of Aaron's being deputed to assist him.¹

In the Pentateuch, the Israelites are described as being so enraged at Moses and his brother, on account of their burdens being increased, when Pharaoh refused to comply with his first demand, that they break forth into violent reproaches and invectives. The whole of this, as alike discreditable to the hero and to the people, is entirely suppressed by Josephus.

In the Pentateuch, the faults both of the one and of the other are unreservedly detailed, without any attempt either at disguise or at palliation. Josephus, writing as an encomiast, is silent upon such topics, wherever he can venture to be so. Thus he suppresses the signal crime of the people in worshipping the golden calf; and thus he quite omits the offence, which both Moses and Aaron were guilty of at Meribah. Yet the particulars of this offence are not only told at large in the Pentateuch, but there are likewise perpetual references to it. Moses repeatedly deprecates its punishment, entreating for permission to enter into the promised land, which permission however is constantly refused him. He dwells upon it and alludes to it, as a person weighed down by sorrow for the disappointment of his fondest hope: though, so far as his own legislative credit was

¹ Joseph. Ant. Jud. lib. ii. c. 12. § 2.

concerned, he must have been aware, that neither the punishment nor the ample recording of it were likely to elevate him in the eyes of the people. This was perceived by the wary Josephus: and the whole affair, in all its parts, was accordingly suppressed, as tending only to lower the specious dignity of his hero.

In short, to adopt the words of an excellent writer who has extended the comparison to a considerable length, *we clearly perceive the difference between the genuine narration of Moses himself and the cautious compilation of a remote historian.*

We find Josephus doing what it is natural every compiler of a history should do, when describing the character of a legislator whom he looked up to with reverence, and when detailing the conduct of his countrymen whom he wished to place in the best light: we find him magnifying the talents and virtues of the one, and palliating or excusing the murmurs and idolatries, the obstinacy and crimes, of the other. Now what I contend for is this: that, if the Pentateuch had been compiled by any historian guided by the mere uncontrouled feelings and partialities of the human mind, we should discover them in his describing the character of the man who is represented as the legislator and head of the nation who were the chosen people of God. I could shew by a minute induction, that nothing of this kind occurs in the Pentateuch, and that multiplied instances of it are found in Josephus, who is yet admitted to be an historian of

*general veracity and integrity. But I forbear : I trust I have said enough to prove, that the Pentateuch is written with such strict impartiality, as enables us to rely on the truth of its relation even in the most minute particulars.*¹

VIII. An impostor, as the very term implies, will always have his own interest at heart in the scheme which he seeks to advance : and, since the selfishness of man usually comprizes his own family within its circle, a person of this description will extend his views to the aggrandizement of his children and through them of his remote posterity. Had Moses then been a mere political speculator ; we may be sure, from the never varying operations of human nature, that, under the cloak of religion, he would have aimed at a permanent sovereignty.

His conduct however was the very reverse : and, if we may judge from the principles by which every impostor, *as* an impostor, must be actuated, it is impossible that Moses, acting as he did, could have been a man of that character. Though, in his capacity of God's prophet, and in his quality of an inspired legislator, he was invested with supreme authority : yet he sought not to perpetuate it in his family by that most effectual and most natural of all methods, the proclaiming himself king. As Diodorus observes, while he discharged all the functions of sovereignty, he never assumed the

¹ Graves's Lect. on the four last books of the Pent. vol. i. p. 63, 64.

style and title of royalty.² This is the more remarkable; because, in those early days, the idea of a commonwealth under whatever modification was altogether unknown. The Egyptians, among whom the Israelites had long sojourned, and to whose customs they were notoriously addicted, were governed by a king; who, to secure the greater reverence to his person, and perpetually to remind his subjects of his boasted descent from the Sun, distinguished himself, as his stated title, by an appellation of the solar deity: and every tribe, with which the people could have the least acquaintance, was uniformly under the rule of its own petty regulus. No surprize therefore would have been excited, had Moses claimed to unite in his own person, like the successors of Mohammed in the Caliphate, the two offices of king and of prophet: and the commanding influence, by whatever means acquired, which led the Israelites to acknowledge him in the one capacity, would have equally induced them to recognize him in the other. But no such ambition seems for a moment to have agitated the mind of the Hebrew lawgiver. He neither made himself king; nor did he seek to perpetuate his sovereign authority in the line of his sons or even of his tribe. His children, without a single effort in their favour, were consigned to the condition of obscure Levites, not in the least degree elevated above their ministering brethren: and, for his successor in the supreme mili-

² Diod. Bibl. Eclog. c lib. xl. p. 922.

tary and civil command, he nominated his servant Joshua of the tribe of Ephraim. Such disinterestedness bears no resemblance to the conduct of an artful political impostor : nor can it be accounted for on the principles, which must necessarily actuate every impostor *as* such.

On the whole, it will be found utterly impossible to reconcile any part of the behaviour of Moses with the theory of his being a mere impostor.

CHAP. IV.

THE EVIDENCE FROM AUTHENTIC HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS WRITTEN ABOUT THE TIME, WHEN THE THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF WHICH THEY TREAT WAS PROMULGATED; AND FROM CERTAIN COMMEMORATIVE ORDINANCES, WHICH COMMENCED AT THE PERIOD WHEN THE EVENTS TO WHICH THEY RELATE WERE TRANSACTED.

THE argument has hitherto been conducted hypothetically. Supposing the scriptural account of the exodus to be true in its great outlines, which is abundantly clear from the concurring testimony of gentile historians; and arguing from it, as we would do from any other history: we have found ourselves brought to the necessary conclusion, that Moses neither could have been deceived himself, nor could have had any design to deceive others. It will now be necessary to shew, that such account *is* true; and *that*, not merely in the great outlines such as the departure from Egypt and the

passage through the wilderness and the final occupation of Palestine, but likewise in all the most minute particulars. In thus speaking of the exodus, I take it in a large sense, as including both the emigration of Israel from the land of Goshen and their progress to the country where they ultimately established themselves.

At present then we have to demonstrate, that *authentic historical documents have been handed down to posterity from the time, when the theological system of Moses was promulgated : and that certain commemorative ordinances or monuments have existed from the period, when various events occurred which are mentioned in the history attached to that theological system ; those commemorative ordinances or monuments being declared to have derived their origin from those identical events, which accordingly they profess to commemorate.*

I. The documents, which claim to have been thus handed down to posterity, are the five books, attributed to Moses himself, and usually denominated *the Pentateuch*. Now the question before us is, whether they were indeed written synchronically with the exodus, or whether they were composed in the name of Moses at a much later period.

1. That the Jews have acknowledged the authenticity of the Pentateuch, from the present day to the era of our Lord's nativity, a period of more than eighteen centuries, admits not of a possibility of doubt. But this era is long posterior to that

of Moses himself: it will be necessary therefore, in order to establish the point under discussion, to travel backwards step by step, so far as we can safely penetrate according to the established rules of moral evidence.

(1.) About 277 years before the Christian era, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus king of Egypt, the Pentateuch, with the other books of the Old Testament, was translated into Greek for the use of the Alexandrian Jews: and, from the almost universal prevalence of that language, it henceforth became very widely disseminated, and was thus rendered accessible to the learned and inquisitive of every country.

Now that Greek translation, which is still extant and which is in the hands of almost every person, demonstrates, that the Hebrew Pentateuch must have existed 277 years before Christ: because there is that correspondence between the two, which amply proves that the former must have been a version of the latter. But, if it certainly existed 277 years before Christ, it must have existed in the days of Ezra at the time of the return from Babylon in the year before Christ 536: because there is no point between those two epochs, to which with a shadow of probability we can ascribe its composition. It existed therefore in the year 536 before the Christian era.

(2.) Thus we have gained one retrogressive step: let us next see, whether with equal certainty we can gain another.

As it cannot be rationally denied that the Pentateuch has been in existence ever since the return of the Jews from Babylon in the year 536 before the Christian era, some have thence been pleased to contend that it was the work of Ezra; being a digested compilation of the indistinct and fabulous traditions of that people, which, like most nations of antiquity, they possessed in great abundance.

To such an opinion, when thoroughly sifted, there are insuperable objections; however specious it may appear to a hasty observer.

In the book of Ezra, *the Law of Moses the man of God* is specifically referred to, as a well known *written* document then actually existing: and, in the succeeding book of Nehemiah, we have an ample account of the mode, in which that identical *written* document was openly read to the people under the precise name of *the Book of the Law of Moses which the Lord had commanded to Israel*. Nor is this all: it was not, that *Ezra* produced a new volume and called upon the Jews to receive it as the authentic Law of Moses; but *the people themselves* called upon Ezra to bring forth and read that book, as a work with which they had long been familiarly acquainted.¹ The Law of Moses therefore must have been well known to exist *in writing*, previous to the return from Babylon: and, as Ezra could not have produced under that name a mere compilation of oral traditions; so neither could he have suppressed the ancient

¹ Ezra iii. 2, 4. vii. 6, 14, 25. Nehem. viii, ix, x.

volume of the Law, nor have set forth instead of it that volume which the Jews have ever since received as the authentic Pentateuch. His own book affords proof positive, that some *written* Law of Moses was known to have previously existed ; and the call of the people, that it should be read to them, demonstrates that it could not long have perished ; for, if the work had been confessedly lost for many years, the people could not have called for that which neither they nor their fathers had ever beheld. If then it were suppressed by Ezra in favour of his own spurious composition ; he must both have contrived to make himself master of *every* extant copy of the genuine work, and he must have persuaded a whole people to receive as genuine what almost every man amongst them must immediately have perceived to be spurious. For, if the genuine work were in existence down to the very time of Ezra, a point clearly involved in the demand of the people to have it read to them ; and if the people had been long accustomed to hear it read to them, a point equally implied in their recorded demand upon Ezra : they must *all* have been adequately acquainted with its contents ; and the *higher ranks* among them must have repeatedly perused and must therefore have known the whole of it, just as intimately as Ezra could do himself. But, what was thus universally familiar, could be no more set aside by the fiat of an individual in favour of his own spurious composition ; than the Pentateuch could now be set aside throughout Christendom, in favour of some

newly produced volume which claimed to be the genuine Law of Moses. Add to this, that, when the foundations of the second temple were laid; many persons were alive who well remembered the first.¹ These consequently must have known, whether there was or was not a *written* Law of Moses anterior to the captivity: nor could they be deceived by the production of any novel composition by Ezra.

Such is the evidence afforded, by the very books of Ezra and Nehemiah, to the existence of a *written* Law of Moses prior to the return from Babylon, of a Law *familiarly known* to the whole body of the people. But there is yet another evidence to the same purpose, analogous to that furnished by the Greek translation of the Seventy.

We have now extant two Hebrew copies of the Law of Moses; the one received by the Jews, the other acknowledged by the Samaritans: each maintaining that their own is the genuine record. Now, if we examine these two copies, we shall find their coincidence throughout to be such; that we cannot doubt a moment as to their original identity in every word and in every sentence. The several slight variations, which at present occur in them, may easily be accounted for: partly on the score of national dislike, as the celebrated text in Deuteronomy where the Samaritan reads *mount Gerizim* and the Jewish *mount Ebal*; ² and partly, as may perhaps be the case with most others, from

¹ Ezra iii. 12. Haggai ii. 3.

² Deut. xxvii. 4.

a want of accuracy in transcribers, which could not be prevented save by the interference of a perpetual miracle. The question then is, when and whence did the Samaritans receive their copy of the Pentateuch? We find it to be the same as that, which has been used by the Jews, ever since the return from Babylon. Consequently, if that used by the Jews were the composition of Ezra, the Samaritan Pentateuch must plainly have been a transcript of Ezra's composition. But the utter improbability of such a theory is manifest from the whole tenor of the books both of Ezra and Nehemiah. The hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans is there largely set forth; and we know it to have continued with unabating fury down to the very time of Christ. Hence, if Ezra had produced a spurious code of his own, however unaccountably he might have persuaded the Jews to receive it, he clearly could not have met with the same success among the hostile Samaritans. For, if these latter *were* possessed of a genuine copy of the Law; they would forthwith have confronted with it the forgery of Ezra, and would have held up his imposture to the contempt of all succeeding generations: if they *were not* possessed of a genuine copy; they never would have transcribed and adopted the spurious novelty of their hated neighbours the Jews.

How then came they to have a copy, which after all is the same as the Jewish copy of the Pentateuch? Whence did they procure this copy; which, as it is well known, is still extant?

We read, that, after the king of Assyria had deported the ten tribes and had colonized their territories with a mixed multitude from various parts of his dominions, the new settlers were infested by the incursions of wild beasts. This calamity, agreeably to the prevalent notion of local tutelary gods, they attributed to their not worshipping the god of the land after his own prescribed manner. To remedy the defect therefore, one of the deported Levitical priests was sent to them, that he might *teach them*, as the Assyrian monarch expressed himself, *the manner of the god of the land*. The priest accordingly came among them, and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear Jehovah: but, while they duly received his instructions, they mixed the service of the true God with the service of their native idols. Hence, so far as that particular was concerned, we are informed, that *they neither did after their statutes, nor after their ordinances, nor after the Law and commandment which Jehovah commanded the children of Jacob*.¹

Now it is obvious, that the whole of this account supposes them to have possessed a copy of the Pentateuch: for, if the Priest were to instruct them in the Law of the Lord, he would of course communicate to them a copy of that Law; and, though their ancient superstition led them to disregard its prohibitions, still it could not have been properly said of them, that *they neither did after their sta-*

¹ See 2 Kings xvii. 24—41.

tutes nor after their ordinances nor after the Law and commandment which Jehovah commanded the children of Jacob, if all the while they were wholly unacquainted with those statutes and with those ordinances and with that Law and with that commandment. It is manifest therefore, that they must at that time have received the copy of the Pentateuch, which they always afterwards religiously preserved. But this copy, allowing for the slight variations already noticed, is the very same as that which the Jews and ourselves still receive. Consequently, as the Samaritans received it some years prior even to the Babylonian captivity of Judah, and as it is the very same code as that which some would fain attribute to Ezra : we may be sure, that that learned scribe could not possibly have been its author, but that he has handed down to us the genuine Law of Moses with the utmost good faith and integrity.

Here we cannot but observe the providence of God in raising up so unobjectionable a testimony as that of the Samaritans. They and the Jews cordially hated each other ; and they both possessed a copy of the same Pentateuch. Hence, had there been any disposition to tamper with the text, they acted as a mutual check : and the result has been, that perhaps not a single wilful alteration can be shewn, except the text relative to Gerizim and Ebal. But, as for the wilful and evidently political alteration of this text, whichever party ought to bear the blame of it ; though it probably served to foment the bitter enmity between them,

yet it does not in the least affect any other part of the history. The whole narrative still remains either authentic or fabulous, precisely the same as if no such variation were in existence.

We have now therefore advanced another step. The Pentateuch could not only not have been composed by Ezra : but, as the priest was sent to instruct the Samaritan Cuthites out of the Law of Moses about the year 676 before the Christian era ; that Law, just as we read it now, must plainly have been in existence at that particular epoch.

(3.) An argument of a somewhat similar nature will further conduct us back to the separation of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah,

Since a deported priest of the kingdom of Israel was employed to teach the Cuthic Samaritans *the manner of the God of the land according to the Law and commandment which Jehovah commanded the children of Jacob* ; that manner of worship and that Law must have previously existed in the kingdom of Israel : for the priest could not have communicated what he did not possess.

It is perfectly clear likewise, as we have already seen, from the language used by Ezra and Nehemiah and the Jews after the restoration from Babylon, that the identical written Law of Moses, which we now denominate *the Pentateuch*, existed in the kingdom of Judah under the well-remembered first temple previous to the Babylonian captivity.

The same Law then was equally possessed by the two rival Hebrew kingdoms ; and it plainly

could not have been fabricated during the period of their rivalship. For, had that been the case, the one must have borrowed it from the other : because, without such an admission, the two could not *both* have had it. But Judah, to whom the major part of the sacerdotal tribe adhered, and within whose territories was the acknowledged national temple, would never have borrowed a novel fabrication from a kingdom doubly odious on the score both of its schism and of its rivalship. On the other hand, Israel would be as little disposed to borrow such a fabrication from Judah : for not only would the spirit of hostile rivalship prevent it, but even the obvious policy itself which would be adopted in the rebellious kingdom. From its first rise, its governors were uniformly and naturally jealous of a return to the house of David and of a reunion of all the tribes under one royal head. This jealousy was shewn by Jeroboam, ere he was well seated on the throne. To prevent the people from going up to Jerusalem to worship, as it is specially enjoined in the Law of Moses, lest so they might be tempted to renew their allegiance to Rehoboam ; he set up at Bethel two calves of gold in apparent imitation of the tauric Cherubim of the temple, consecrated priests out of the lowest class, and then told his subjects that it was superfluous for them to resort to the ancient general capital.¹ Now to this daring innovation, in which the same state-policy led all his successors to per-

¹ 1 Kings xii. 26—33.

severe, the Law of Moses stands directly opposed. Hence it is abundantly clear, that, if it had been fabricated by the Levites in the kingdom of Judah with a special eye to the condemnation of the Israelitish schism, it never would have been received into the kingdom of the ten tribes as the genuine and well-known ancient Law of Moses. The same policy, which forbade the Israelites to go up to Jerusalem thrice in the year, would have equally forbidden the reception of a code which strictly enjoined such a practice : and, if that code had been a recent forgery with which they were wholly unacquainted previous to their separation ; we may be sure, that, condemning as it does the plan which they had adopted, the Israelitish princes and all their subjects with them would unanimously have protested against so gross and impudent an imposture. But, instead of this, we find the very code, which condemns their schismatico-political mode of worship, and which therefore they would have rejected if they could : we find this very code, existing among them quite down to the time of their deportation into Assyria, acknowledged as the authentic Law of Moses, and communicated by one of their priests to the Cuthic Samaritans as teaching the proper mode in which they were to serve the God of the country.

Thus manifest is it, that the Israelites could neither have received the Pentateuch from the Jews, nor the Jews from the Israelites. They both however equally possessed that code during the period of their separation. The code therefore

must have existed *prior* to their separation from each other. Now this separation took place about the year 975 before the Christian era. Therefore the very Pentateuch, which we now have, must at that time have been in existence; not only have been in existence, but well known throughout all the Hebrew tribes; not only well known throughout all the tribes, but so fully acknowledged to be the genuine and inspired Law of Moses, that not one of the Israelitish princes dared to impeach it or to reject it, though it constituted the grand obstacle to their favourite state-policy.

(4.) The universal admission of the Pentateuch, as the inspired Law of Moses, throughout the whole commonwealth of Israel, prior to its disruption into two hostile kingdoms; a fact, the necessity of which we have just seen from the circumstance of its being fully recognized by the ten tribes, adverse as it was to their state-policy: this universal reception of the Pentateuch decidedly proves, that it could not have been a novel fabrication at the era of the disruption.

The magnificent temple of Solomon, and the whole ritual attached to it, plainly depend altogether upon the *previously existing* Pentateuch: and that code so strictly prohibits more than one practice of Solomon, that, even to say nothing of the general objection from novelty, it is incredible either that *he* should have been its author or that it should have been written under *his* sanction and authority.

As little can we, with any degree of probability, ascribe it to David. His life was occupied with almost incessant troubles and warfare: and it is difficult to conceive, how a book written by that prince could in the space of a very few years be universally received as the inspired composition of Moses, when no person had ever previously heard that Moses left any legislative code behind him.

The Pentateuch might be more plausibly given to Samuel than to either of those two princes: but this supposition will not stand for a moment the test of rational inquiry. We shall still have the same difficulty to contend with as before: we shall still have to point out, how it was possible that Samuel could persuade all Israel to adopt, as the inspired and authoritative Law of Moses, a mere modern composition of his own, which no person had ever previously heard of. But, in the present case, we must to this difficulty add another. When the people demanded to have a king set over them, Samuel expressed his high disapprobation of the request, and described it as being a rejection of God's regal government.¹ Now, had he been the author of the Pentateuch, and had his object been to retain in his own hands the supreme authority under the more modest but not less efficacious title of God's delegated judge; he would plainly have struck at the root of this not improbable demand, by inserting, as under the authority of Jehovah, an express prohibition. But, instead of

¹ 1 Sam. viii.

this, we find in the Pentateuch no declaration, that the appointment of a king was unlawful. On the contrary, such an event is anticipated and provided for: and it is provided for in a manner, which Samuel would never have excogitated, had he been a mere worldly-minded politician. Supposing this to have been his character, we may easily conceive that he would oppose the appointment of a king, because it plainly at once subverted his own authority: but, when he found that he could not resist the torrent; he would have sought, like a prudent courtier, to conciliate the new monarch. Hence he would never have inserted those restraints, which must have been unspeakably irksome to the pride and ambition and sensuality of an eastern monarch: or, if he *did* insert them, which he must have done on the supposition that the Pentateuch was *his* composition; we may be sure, that the fraud would have been detected and exposed, either by Saul during his enmity with Samuel, or by Solomon during his perpetual violation of the restraints in question.¹ When the former of these princes was so awfully, and unceremoniously, and even traitorously (according to every human idea of allegiance), rebuked by him: had Saul been aware that the whole Pentateuch, which galled him so severely, was the modern fabrication of his presumptuous subject (which he must have been, were the book never heard of before the judgeship of Samuel); he would no

¹ Deut. xvii. 14—20.

doubt have most severely retorted upon him, would have pointed out the gross imposture, and would have demanded proof positive of the authority under which he claimed to act in thus audaciously bearding his sovereign. But, instead of adopting such a line of conduct, he humbles himself before his austere reprove, and begs that he will join with him in deprecatory supplication to the Lord Jehovah.¹ This behaviour decidedly shews, how fully he recognized the divine authority of the Law, and how little he thought of calling its authenticity in question. A man, like Saul, would have extricated himself if he could: and, had the Pentateuch been a mere modern figment of Samuel, he would have scoffed at the preposterous idea, that he was to be deprived of his kingdom simply because he had not obeyed a forged commandment to exterminate the Amalekites.

(5.) We have now ascended to within less than four centuries after the exodus from Egypt and the alleged promulgation of the Law from mount Sinai: and, from Ezra to Samuel, we have found no person, to whom the composition of the Pentateuch can with any shew of reason or probability be assigned. The only remaining question is, whether it can be thought to have been written during the three hundred and fifty six years which elapsed between the entrance of the Israelites into Palestine and the appointment of Saul to be king of Israel.

¹ 1 Sam. xv. 12—35.

Now the whole history which we have of that period utterly forbids such a supposition. The Israelites, though perpetually lapsing into idolatry, are uniformly described as acknowledging the authority of a *written* Law of Moses: and this Law, from generation to generation, is stated to be the directory by which the judges governed the people. Thus Samuel expressly refers to a well-known commandment of Jehovah and to the divine legation of Moses and Aaron, in a speech which he makes to the assembled Israelites.¹ Thus the man of God, in his prophetic threat to Eli, similarly refers to the familiar circumstance recorded in the Pentateuch, that the house of his ancestor had been chosen to the pontificate out of all the tribes of Israel.² Thus, when the nations are enumerated which were left to prove the people; it is said, that they were left for this purpose, that it might be known whether the Israelites would hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.³ Thus Joshua is declared to have written the book which bears his name, as a supplement to a prior book, which is denominated *the book of the Law of God*.⁴ Thus likewise he specially asserts, that this *book of the Law of God* is *the book of the Law of Moses*; speaks familiarly of precepts, which are written in that book; repre-

¹ 1 Sam. xii. 6, 14, 15.

² 1 Sam. ii. 27, 28. Numb. xxv. 10—13.

³ Judg. iii. 1—4.

⁴ Josh. xxiv. 26.

sents himself as reading its contents to all the assembled people, so that none of them could be ignorant of its purport; and mentions his writing a copy of it in the presence of the children of Israel.¹ And thus finally we hear of the original, whence that copy is professed to have been taken, in the volume of the Pentateuch itself: for we are there told, that Moses with his own hand wrote the words of THIS Law in a BOOK; and that he then commanded the Levites to take THIS BOOK of the Law and to put it in the side of the ark of the covenant, that it might be there for a witness in all succeeding ages against the Israelites in case they should violate its precepts.² Now this book could plainly be no rule to them, unless its contents were universally known. Accordingly, ample provision was made, that they *should* be universally known: for, in addition to the perpetually operating command that the precepts of the Law should be taught diligently to their children, there is a special injunction, that, at the end of every seven years, when all Israel should come to appear before the Lord in the place which he should choose, THIS LAW should be publicly read before all Israel in their hearing; before men and women and children and strangers, without any privacy or reservation, *that they might hear, and that they might learn, and that they might fear the Lord, and that they might observe to do all the words of*

¹ Josh. i. 7, 8. viii. 31, 32, 34, 35.

² Deut. xxxi. 24—6.

THIS LAW.¹ In pursuance of this injunction, we find Joshua industriously affecting the greatest possible publicity: for we are told, that, between Ebal and Gerizim, he read to the people *ALL the words of the Law, the blessings and cursings, according to ALL that is written in the book of the Law. There was not a word of ALL that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.*²

Such being the systematic publicity of the Pentateuch from the very time when it was first written, it is utterly impossible, that any forgery of a subsequent period could have supplanted it. The people, as we find to have been the case in all ages, were universally acquainted with it. Neither the separation of the kingdoms, nor the hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans, produced any ignorance of its contents or any abatement of the veneration in which it was held. From generation to generation, it was openly read and acknowledged to be the Law of Moses: nor can any point be found, to which we can satisfactorily ascribe its origin, short of the great legislator himself. At any one epoch, during the whole existence of the Hebrew polity, it would have been just as impossible to introduce a new and spurious Pentateuch; as it would be now impossible to introduce a new and spurious Bible. In each case, the reason is

¹ Deut. xxxi. 9—13.

² Joshua viii. 34, 35.

the very same: *the general publicity of the book itself*. The sacred volumes of the pagan hierarchy were locked up in the adyta of their temples, and were carefully withheld from the profane vulgar: hence they might be tampered with, from time to time, according to the interest or pleasure of the priesthood. But the Law of Moses disclaimed, from the very first, all mysterious secrecy: the written volume was to be communicated, without reserve, to every individual Israelite: hence it was absolutely impossible, that such a code could either be interpolated to serve a present turn or be altogether supplanted by a new composition which at a late period claimed to be the genuine record. Let us fix, when we please, for the appearance of the novel code: and we shall ever find ourselves utterly unable to get rid of the old one, which is spoken of as actually existing in the days of Moses and Joshua. When the Sibylline verses were burned with the Capitol, the Roman senate repaired the loss as well as they could by collecting such fragments as might be met with in Syria and Egypt and the Greek islands. Out of these they framed a new copy: but, when their labour was ended, they never attempted to persuade the people that it was the identical one, which had been destroyed, and which they had always had. This, they well knew, would have been impossible; for not a man in Rome was ignorant, that the primeval copy had perished in the fire. Hence they only reported, that the loss had been repaired so far as it could be repaired, by collecting into one

volume such scattered fragments as were found by their delegates.¹

2. These remarks will serve to introduce another train of reasoning, which will equally shew the necessity of our admitting the Pentateuch to be the composition of Moses.

(1.) Had it been the work of any subsequent age, the author, we may be sure, would never have produced a fabrication so clumsy, that it should stand self-convicted of imposture and forgery.

Whoever may have composed it, the book describes itself to have been written by Moses, and provides strict injunctions for its being publicly read at certain stated intervals to all the assembled people. Now an impostor might have wished to decorate his work with the venerated name of the Hebrew legislator : but he would never have betrayed his forgery by needlessly declaring, that this very book was appointed to be publicly read, in order that the whole nation might be thoroughly acquainted with its contents, from the very time of its first composition. Had the Pentateuch been compiled by Ezra for instance from the *oral* traditions of the Jews, and had no written document of Moses himself been extant ; the people, when he produced it, must have known full well, that it was a mere novel composition, that it never had been publicly read to them from generation to generation as it purports to have been, and that in fact they had never so much as heard of its

¹ See Graves's Lect. part i. lect. 1.

previous existence. This obstacle, from the very texture of the book as we now read it both in the Hebrew and in the Samaritan and in the Greek copies, will always present itself, wherever we attempt to fix the introduction of the Pentateuch short of the time of Moses. So far as the work testifies respecting its own composition and publicity, let it have been brought forward when it might posterior to the days of the Jewish lawgiver, its author must always have laid himself, *gratuitously* laid himself, under the double necessity of persuading the nation, both that the book was written by Moses, and likewise that they had always publicly heard it read as such. The first point, as involving a mere literary imposture, might no doubt have been accomplished: for, though by some means or other attempts of this kind have generally been detected and exposed; yet the nation *might* have been persuaded *simply* to believe, that the work was the composition of Moses. But the grand difficulty would be to accomplish the second point: for how could the people be satisfactorily convinced, that this *novel* document had *always* been familiar to them, that they had *always* been accustomed to esteem it the work of Moses, and that they had *always* been in the habit both of privately reading it themselves and of hearing it publicly read to them in their solemn national assemblies? This difficulty however an impostor might easily have spared himself; for he plainly might have rested content with merely ascribing his composition to Moses, and might

have altogether omitted any mention either of public or of private reading: hence, as he *might*, no doubt he *would*; common sense alone being his guide, which would at least have saved him from *needless* self-conviction. But the difficulty, we find, exists in all its force. If therefore the Pentateuch be a comparatively modern work, we shall have to account for the extraordinary fact, that its author not only persuaded the Israelites to receive it as the composition of Moses (a cheap triumph over their credulity), but that he likewise persuaded them to believe that they had *always* had among them this novel production and that they had *always* been accustomed to hear it publicly read so that they were familiarly acquainted with its contents.

Nor will the difficulty rest here. Almost every book of the Old Testament, from Joshua down to Malachi, either mentions or refers to the written volume of the Law of Moses, as both existing and as being well known to the whole people. Such being the case, if we suppose any comparatively modern author, Ezra for instance, to have written the Pentateuch; we shall be compelled additionally to suppose, that he likewise wrote almost every other book of the Hebrew Scriptures. For, on the hypothesis that Ezra was the author of the Pentateuch, how are we to account for its being mentioned in the book of Joshua? If the book of Joshua were written *prior* to Ezra, and if Ezra *himself* were the author of the Pentateuch; the book of Joshua plainly could not have men-

tioned the Pentateuch. But the book of Joshua *does* mention the Pentateuch, declaring it also to have been publicly read to all the people. Therefore, if the Pentateuch were the work of Ezra; the book of Joshua must likewise have been the work, either of Ezra, or of some one of his confederates. Exactly the same argument will apply to every other book, in which the Law is either mentioned or alluded to. It is perfectly clear, that a non-entity could not be mentioned: and, if the Pentateuch were written by Ezra, the Pentateuch was manifestly a non-entity before the days of Ezra. Hence every book, which either notices it, or which even supposes its existence, must inevitably have been more recent than the Pentateuch itself. So that, if we ascribe the Pentateuch to Ezra; we must likewise, in order to prevent our theory from halting, ascribe to him nearly the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures: a conclusion, which bears a strong resemblance to the conjecture of the sagacious speculatist, who maintained the golden classics of Rome to have been composed by the monks of that leaden period usually denominated the middle ages.

Neither yet have we reached the end of the difficulty. By far the greatest part of the Pentateuch, by whomsoever it might have been written, professes to be the national law of the Israelites: that law, by which all their civil concerns were regulated; that law, which assigned its territorial limits to each tribe; that law, which fixed the descent of landed property; that law, under which

every man made good his title to the perpetually entailed, though temporarily alienated, inheritance of his forefathers; that law, under which all the peculiarities of the temple-service were regularly and systematically prescribed. Such being the nature of the code, how was it possible, that it could have been forged either by Ezra or by any other person subsequent to the occupation of Palestine by the Israelites? No writer after that era could have produced a novel code of his own; and then have persuaded the people, not only to accept it, but to acknowledge that it had *always* regulated their concerns both civil and theological. As reasonably might we assert, that the whole code of the English law was forged by Blackstone and that it had no existence before him, as that the whole code of the Hebrew law was a mere novelty forged by Ezra. This learned scribe is in fact the only person, to whom such an extraordinary imposture can be ascribed with even a decent shew of plausibility: for it might be contended, that the Babylonian captivity, by the complete dislocation which it produced, gave to Ezra an opportunity of fraud, which none of his predecessors could have enjoyed. But such a fond notion is at once overturned, both by the shortness of that captivity, and by the internal evidence of the book of Ezra itself. *Many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, says Ezra, had seen the first house, and were moved to tears when they had compared it with the second:*¹ not one of these per-

¹ Ezra iii. 12.

sons therefore could have been imposed upon by any novel code, which that scribe might seek to introduce; as they well remembered the first temple; they must likewise have well remembered whether they had or had not a written law prior to the captivity. If the English were deported for the space of seventy years, and if at the close of that period they were brought back to their own country: they could not return perfectly ignorant, whether they had ever been governed by a written law; they could not return liable to be imposed upon by a supposititious law, the author of which persuades them to accept it as the genuine and familiar code of their forefathers. So again: Ezra describes the cautious exactness, with which a register was kept of the genealogy of the priesthood through the whole period of the captivity, all those being degraded from the sacerdotal function whose names were not found in that public document: and he further remarks, that, when the second temple was dedicated, *they set the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God which is at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses.*¹ Now, if many remembered the first temple, and if this *book of Moses* were all the while written by himself: how could he persuade the people, that he was arranging matters according to a well known ancient code, when, after all, that code had absolutely no existence until he first produced it subsequent to the Babylonian captivity?

¹ Ezra ii. 62. vi. 18.

As we have here then a direct attestation to the existence of a theological code by Moses *anterior* to the captivity : so the book of Jeremiah affords an equally direct attestation to the existence of his civil code previous to the same era. The prophet buys a field from his cousin ; on the express ground that the right of inheritance, and consequently that the right of redemption, was his. After the necessary forms have been complied with, he charges Baruch with the care of the evidences or title-deeds ; stating, that, although the deportation of Judah was close at hand, yet *houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.*¹ The whole of this business was transacted according to a regulation now subsisting in the written law of Moses : and, by virtue of the deeds committed to Baruch as a trustee, the heirs of Jeremiah would, upon the return from Babylon, claim the property of their ancestors. But it is perfectly evident from the very nature of things, that no such transaction could ever have taken place, if the civil law of Moses had not existed in full force and in universally recognized vigour as the statute law of the land *previous* to the Babylonian captivity.

(2.) I see not what can be further objected on this topic, save that Ezra or Samuel or some other unknown person largely interpolated the genuine Pentateuch written by Moses.

An objection of such a stamp must of course relate to the miraculous and historical part of the volume : for, if it be conceded, as conceded it must

¹ Jerem. xxxii. See the whole chapter.

be, that the Israelites possessed a written code, bearing the name and authority of Moses, from their very earliest occupation of Palestine; no interpolation can be alleged with any shew of probability, except an interpolation of those passages which describe certain preternatural interpositions of the Deity. Let us then inquire, how far this hypothesis may serve the cause of infidelity.

If each account of a miracle be an interpolation, then of course that miracle was never heard of until the interpolation was made. At all events, the interpolation being subsequent to the original composition of the Pentateuch, there must have been a time when it first occupied a place in the genuine text. Now the contents of the Pentateuch, from the very time of its author, as both itself and the other successive books of the Hebrew Scriptures largely testify, were systematically made public to the whole nation; insomuch that, even from infancy, each individual was familiarly acquainted with them. Such being the case, as any interpolation whatsoever would be liable to immediate detection; so an interpolation of the marvellous kind would be peculiarly obnoxious to immediate discovery. A wonderful tale instantly arrests the attention both of young and of old: and, when once related, it rivets itself so firmly to the memory, that it never is forgotten. Hence every one, who *first* heard a tale of this description read out of the Pentateuch into which it had *recently* been inserted, would be perfectly sure that he had never heard it *before*: or, if he had heard it before as *an unwritten*

traditional fable, he would be quite certain that he had never previously heard it read *out of the Pentateuch*. This would of course lead him to search and inquire, whether such a tale was to be found in any other copy of the Law, save that out of which the scribe was publicly reading: and the evident result would be an immediate detection of the fraud. For let us only figure to ourselves the utter astonishment, into which an assembly of devout Israelites must have been thrown, when they perceived for the first time the scribe gravely reading out of his copy of the Law an account of certain stupendous miracles, which either they had never once heard of before, or which they had heard of only to smile at their absurdity as constituting the baseless subject of vulgar legends. Had they never once previously heard of such portents, the bare-faced imposture would be instantly rejected with contempt and horror and indignation: had they heard of them only in the idle tales of the populace, they would be scarcely less surprized and disgusted to hear such figments now gravely recited to them as a portion of that venerable law which had been familiar to them from their very childhood. What would a Christian congregation have thought, at any one period from the time of the apostles down to the present time, if their attention had been suddenly arrested by hearing the officiating priest read to them, as a portion of the New Testament, some of the silly fables recorded in the gospel of Christ's infancy? Would they be persuaded forthwith to receive them as the authentic

word of God? The experiment was tried by certain heretics in the primitive Church, who endeavoured to procure the reception of spurious or garbled or interpolated gospels; that so, under the sanction of divine authority, their false tenets might be the more effectually disseminated: but, as might naturally be expected, it wholly failed of success. Now the reason of the failure was the very same as that, which must equally have been a reason why all attempts to interpolate the Pentateuch must have similarly failed. The genuine gospels and epistles were constantly *read in public* throughout all the churches; and copies of them were *multiplied*, with pious care and labour, among the faithful. Hence the profane intrusion of forgery was effectually prevented, and every attempt of the kind was immediately detected and exposed. But the same moral causes *must* produce the same effects, whether in the Levitical or in the Christian Church. The *public reading* therefore of the Pentateuch, and the *multiplication* of copies for the purpose of private reading, must have precluded all possibility of interpolation among the Israelites; just as the same causes precluded all possibility of interpolating the New Testament among Christians. Accordingly we find, that the only probable interpolation of the latter, the famous text of *the three witnesses*, so far from being unanimously admitted, has been constantly protested against; and has at length, for the most part, been freely given up. This text however relates not to any visible or palpable miracle, the first introduction of which

would be calculated immediately to rouse the attention: it respects only a point of doctrine, sufficiently established without it, and perfectly familiar to the whole Christian Church from the very beginning. Thus impossible must it have been for any subsequent writer to interpolate the Pentateuch with a tissue of specious wonders.

There is yet another ground for believing any such attempt to be altogether impossible. As the multiplication and early jealousies of Christian churches effectually prevented the interpolation of the copies which each individual church possessed; so, from the time when the Israelites were divided into two kingdoms each possessing numerous copies of the Pentateuch, that volume could have been no more interpolated without instant detection, than the volume of the New Testament from the time of the apostles down to the present hour. In each case, the same jealousy would work the same effects: and thus, by the all-wise providence of God, even the bad passions of men were made to bring about the accomplishment of eventual good. A similar cause would in some measure operate prior to the division of Israel into two kingdoms. During the three first centuries after the occupation of Palestine, the Hebrews seem to have been in a very divided and unconnected state. Their commonwealth was strictly federal, each tribe constituting a petty and detached people. These small communities, both in peace and in war, acted quite independently of one another: nor does the authority even of the Judge or Pendragon.

or Stadtholder, so far as we can collect from the history, appear to have always extended over the whole nation. Judah and Simeon only fought against the Canaanites :¹ Naphthali and Zebulun alone followed Barak against Sisera :² Gideon sent only for levies throughout Manasseh and Asher and Zebulun and Naphthali :³ Jephthah, in his war with Ammon, was the captain of none save the Gileadites.⁴ Nay more, at a very early period there was even a religious schism. The Danites appear to have been rather seceders, than idolaters in the proper sense of the word : for, though in process of time they might too superstitiously venerate their emulative Teraphim or Cherubin ; yet their purpose evidently was to set up a priesthood and tabernacle of their own, that so they might supersede the necessity of three long annual journeys to visit the national tabernacle at Shiloh.⁵ Now it is obvious, that such a political constitution as this would have the same direct tendency to prevent any interpolation of the Pentateuch before the days of Samuel, as the division of the Catholic Christian Church into various oppidan or provincial or national churches would have to prevent any interpolation of the New Testament.

Hence, under whatever aspect the present objection be viewed, it seems to be altogether groundless and futile.

¹ Judg. i. 3.

² Judg. iv. 6, 10. v. 14—18, 23.

³ Judg. vi. 35.

⁴ Judg. xi. 4—11.

⁵ Judg. xvii, xviii.

(3.) Neither again can it be urged, that, as numerous legends of saintly miracles have been admitted into the Roman Church, so numerous legends of wonders and portents might equally have been adopted into the national creed of Israel.

The two cases are not at all parallel. We are considering the possibility of interpolating *the Pentateuch*. Now the matter analogous to this matter is the possibility of interpolating *the New Testament*. To prove therefore from the Romish legends, that *the Pentateuch* might have been interpolated; it will be necessary to shew, that *the New Testament* has been enriched by the admission of those legends: otherwise the mere insulated existence of such legends does not at all bear upon the present question. The Talmudical wonders of the Jewish Rabbins may well vie with the miraculous exploits of the Popish saints; and the former, be it observed, bear exactly the same analogical relation to the Pentateuch that the latter do to the Gospel: but the portents of the Talmud have not more been inserted in the Pentateuch, than the miracles of the Popish saints have been inserted in the New Testament. Whatever superstitious corruptions may have crept both into the Levitical Church of old and into the Christian Church during the middle ages, still, so far as literary integrity is concerned, they have been alike faithful depositaries of the treasure committed to them.

II. As the history then of the affairs transacted during the life of Moses must have been written synchronically with their transaction: so we shall

additionally find, that certain commemorative ordinances or monuments existed among the Jews from the period when the events took place, which they are said to commemorate, and which are duly recorded in the history.

1. Foremost among these stands the ordinance of circumcision, when viewed in connection with its declared origin.

Other nations besides the Israelites have adopted the practice in question ; such as the Egyptians, the Colchians, the Troglodytes, the Ethiopians of Africa, the Phenicians, and the Syrians upon the rivers Thermodon and Parthenius : but, though its high antiquity mounted beyond the records of the Pagans, no particular reason was assigned for it, save that some professed their adherence to it for the sake of cleanliness.¹ Now it is this precise want of an historical reason ; which constitutes, so far as the point of evidence is concerned, the grand difference between the circumcision of the Gentiles and the circumcision of the Israelites. In the case of the Gentiles, it proved no one historical fact : in the case of the Israelites, it proved the historical fact that Abraham was commanded to adopt the rite and to hand it down to his posterity, as a badge of their being in certain elect lines the peculiar people of Jehovah.

This fact, which is a vital fact in the Mosaical history, it decidedly and incontrovertibly establishes.

¹ Herod. Hist. lib. ii. c. 104, 37. Diod. Bibl. lib. i. p. 24. lib. iii. p. 165.

For, though the Israelites, like any other nation, might have *simply* adopted the rite of circumcision; they could not have adopted it, *as a commemorative ordinance professing to commence from the time when the commemorated fact occurred*, unless that fact really *had* occurred. The reason is obvious. If the belief, associated with the rite, had commenced at any given point of time *subsequent* to the adoption of the rite itself; the persons, who first embraced the belief, must unaccountably have suffered themselves to be persuaded, not only that such was the origin of the rite, but that they and their fathers before them from the very time of its primeval institution always *knew* and *believed* that such *was* its origin.

The force of this argument will appear more distinctly, if exhibited in a practical form.

Suppose then, that the belief, which the Israelites associated with the rite, had no foundation. In that case, they must plainly have once used the rite, like the Egyptians and others, without attaching *any* particular opinion to it. The belief however, which they still associate with the rite and which we know them to have associated with it for many ages, must evidently have had *a beginning*: otherwise, it never could have *at all* existed. At what time then did the *already* circumcised Israelites adopt it? Let us choose what era we please, short of that set forth in the Pentateuch: and we shall never be able to account for the rise of the belief. The person, who, on the present supposition, first taught it to the *already* circumcised

Israelites, must have taught it them for the purpose of accounting for *the origin* of the practice. Now, in pursuance of such a plan, he could have said to them nothing more than this. *You are circumcised, BECAUSE God commanded your father Abraham to adopt the rite and to hand it down to his posterity ; enjoining him at the same time diligently to teach his children, so that they again might teach their children, how the rite was meant as a standing token or sign of a covenant between them and Jehovah. Such is the import and true origin of your national practice of circumcision.* Now what could the Israelites, who till then were quite ignorant both of the one and of the other, think of a man who thus addressed them? They would obviously reply: *We use indeed the rite of circumcision, as many of our neighbours do ; but, as we all agree, both its origin and its import are buried in the deepest antiquity.¹ Had matters been as you pretend to tell us, we must, even by your own account, have ALREADY been well acquainted with each of those particulars. For, if the rite commenced with Abraham under the circumstances which you detail, he must have communicated those circumstances to his children, and they again to their children from generation to generation, until at length the particulars in question reached ourselves. But, so far is this from being the case, we never heard a syllable on the subject, until*

¹ Herodotus remarks upon gentile circumcision, that it was so ancient a practice that it was utterly impossible to point out its author. Hist. lib. ii. c. 104.

you undertook to be our teacher. If what you say be true, we could not possibly have been ignorant of it : or, if, by some incredible chance, a whole generation of many circumcised thousands agreed unanimously to suppress the ancient tradition and no longer to hand it down to their posterity ; how came you to have gained this accurate acquaintance with it ? Try, if you can convince the Egyptians and the Colchians. Like ourselves, and for the very same reason, they will treat your narrative as a clumsy tale, so ill contrived, that by its very texture it necessarily stands self-convicted of falsehood.

In this manner must the Israelites have always answered, if the belief attached to their rite of circumcision was *less ancient* than the rite itself : nor can the difficulty be ever avoided, let us select what time we please for the *commencement* of the belief. The difficulty, in fact, is inherent in the circumstance, that the rite professes to have been attended with a particular belief *from the very moment when the rite itself originated*. Hence to all, who received the rite, the belief must inevitably have been familiar : just as to every English school-boy, who from generation to generation duly burns the effigy of the Popish incendiary in his November bonfire, the belief associated with that venerable practice is equally familiar. Had the custom of the bonfires on that particular day existed *before* the belief attached to them ; no powers of rhetoric would persuade a plain rustic, that he and his fathers before him *well knew* that they had always

from time out of mind kindled them in memory of a fact, with which he then became acquainted *for the first time*. You might perhaps, on the earliest introduction of the belief, persuade him, that the fires originated from a long-forgotten particular fact; though his faith would probably not be very vigorous: but you never could persuade him, that *the knowledge* of that fact had been handed down from father to son; you never could persuade him, that he and his companions had *always known* the particular which you now *first* communicate to him. Precisely, in short, as the universal and standing belief, associated with our November fires, must have *preceded* and *occasioned* the fires themselves: so the universal and standing belief, associated with the rite of circumcision, must have *preceded* and *occasioned* that ordinance. In the very nature of things, the belief could never have been *engrafted upon* the rite. But, if the rite of circumcision thus demonstrate the reality of God's covenant with Abraham, we have absolutely ascertained the truth of a most important fact, which necessarily involves our admission of various other important facts. All these facts however stand recorded in the Pentateuch. Therefore we have so far a proof, that the Pentateuch contains an authentic history.

2. The Jews have another ordinance, religiously observed by them to the present day, which similarly proves the occurrence of a second important fact: I mean the annual celebration of the pass-over.

We have already seen, that, while the gentile historians found themselves compelled to acknowledge the sojourning of the Israelites in Egypt and their subsequent emigration from that country into Palestine, they endeavoured to account for the circumstance, by narratives not always accordant with each other but still universally disagreeing with the narrative of Moses, by narratives which set forth the emigration in a mode discreditable to the Israelites and honourable (so far as the majesty of empire is concerned) to the Egyptians.¹ Now the standing ordinance of the passover demonstrates the fact, that all the first-born of Egypt were miraculously cut off in a single night, and that the destroying Angel passed over the dwellings of Israel so that not a soul perished within them. From the very time of its alleged occurrence, the rite in question was enjoined to be celebrated, the first paschal lamb having been slain on the identical night of preternatural devastation. *This night of the Lord, we are told, was to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations: it was a night to be much observed unto the Lord, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt.*² The well known mode of observing it need not be here detailed: what I am at present concerned with, in the way of argument, is *the perpetuity of its observation from the very night when all the first-born of Egypt are said to have miraculously perished and when the Israelites emigrated in a body*

¹ See above sect. ii. c. 3. § III. 3.

² Exod. xii. 42.

from the country. This perpetuity we find enjoined in the following remarkable terms. *Ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons FOR EVER. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses.*¹ To the due celebration of the passover, quite down to the time of our Lord, we have repeated attestations in the Scriptures both of the Old and of the New Testament:² and the ordinance is still, even to the present day, religiously and punctually observed by the Jews.

Such then is said to have been the institution of the passover: and such has been its observance from generation to generation, agreeably to the original command and explanatory comment delivered through Moses. Age after age, the Israelites have celebrated it: and, age after age, they have carefully handed down to their children the miraculous circumstance, upon which it was founded, and which it was designed to commemorate; read-

¹ Exod. xii. 24—27.

² See Numb. ix. 5. 2 Kings xxiii. 22. 2 Chron. xxx. 15. xxxv. 1, 11, 13. Ezra vi. 20. Ezek. xlv. 21. Matt. xxvi. 17.

ing, at the same time, from the volume of the Law the written history of the whole transaction.

Now, under these circumstances, it is manifest, that the very same train of reasoning, which has been applied to the ordinance of circumcision, may be applied with equal cogency to the ordinance of the passover. Neither of them is a *bare* rite or custom, as circumcision was among the Egyptians and Colchians and Ethiopians and Phenicians, of which no one could state either the origin or the reason: but each of them is a rite, inseparably associated with the belief of an historical fact, and so associated with that belief that the rite must inevitably have commenced from the precise time when the fact occurred. To repeat the preceding arguments, were plainly superfluous. It is enough to say, that, as the rite of circumcision demonstrates the making of God's covenant with Abraham and his posterity; so the rite of the passover equally demonstrates the miraculous death of the first-born and the triumphant exodus of Israel.

3. Exactly on the same principle, certain monuments, familiar to the ancient Israelites, similarly demonstrated to *them* the facts, with which those monuments were connected, or to which they professedly related. These indeed, unlike circumcision and the passover, have ceased to afford an ocular demonstration to *ourselves*: but their tendency must have been precisely the same in the case of all those, who *did* behold them; and even *we* shall find it impossible to account for their occurrence, except by admitting the facts of which they testified.

(1.) Thus the stone tables of the decalogue, with the sacred ark and the cherubim, were a standing proof to every Israelite who beheld them, that the Law was supernaturally delivered from mount Sinai. Thus the pot of manna, laid up before the Lord to be kept for successive generations, was a standing demonstration, that the people were miraculously fed with manna during forty years in the wilderness. Thus the brazen serpent, which was preserved until the time of Hezekiah, necessarily proved the healing of the Israelites when they were bitten by the flying serpents. And thus, not to multiply instances, the twelve stones in Gilgal afforded a perpetual demonstration to all succeeding ages, that the waters of Jordan had miraculously divided themselves and had afforded a free passage to the whole people.

(2.) The account of this last transaction will serve to shew the cogency of what may be termed *monumental evidence* : and it will immediately be perceived, that the argument from commemorative monuments is the very same as the argument from commemorative ordinances.

It came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying, Take ye twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man ; and command ye them, saying, Take ye hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests feet stood firm, twelve stones : and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging-place where ye shall lodge this night. And Joshua called

the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man : and Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel : that this may be a sign among you, that, when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying ; What mean ye by these stones ? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord ; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever. And the children of Israel did so, as Joshua commanded ; and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel ; and carried them over with them unto the place, where they lodged ; and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood : and they are there unto this day—And the people came up out of Jordan, on the tenth day of the first month ; and encamped in Gilgal, in the east-border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying : When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying ; What mean these stones ? Then ye shall let your children know, saying ;

*Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over ; as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us until we were gone over : that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty : that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.*¹

Thus it appears, that, in express remembrance of the miraculous passage, twelve stones were set up at Gilgal not far from the banks of Jordan ; and that twelve other stones, apparently of much larger dimensions, were erected in the channel of the river, so that they might be visible above the surface of its waters. With these monuments therefore was associated the occurrence of a fact, which they were said to commemorate : and the fact, from generation to generation, was declared to have taken place *at the very time* when the monuments were erected. Nor was the memory of the event solely intrusted to the stream of tradition : it was also preserved in a book, purporting to have been written *synchronically* with the entrance of the Israelites into Palestine across the exhausted bed of the Jordan. Such being the case, it is plainly impossible, that a belief of this nature could ever have been attached to the monumental stones, unless the belief itself had been originally founded upon absolute matter of fact. For, if, from the very first erection of the stones,

¹ Joshua iv. 1—9, 19—24.

the eye-witnesses of the alleged transit carefully taught their children the import of the commemorative monument; and if these children again taught their children the same, and so onward from generation to generation: it is manifest, that the belief, associated with the stones, must have been as old as the erection of the stones themselves. This belief, from the very mode in which it was communicated, could never have sprung up at an era subsequent to the erection of the stones. For, if we suppose its origin to be *posterior* to their erection, the man, who first introduced it, must not only have persuaded the Israelites, that the stones were *simply* commemorative of the alleged fact; but he must additionally have persuaded them, that they themselves *already knew* the stones to be thus commemorative, having *universally received that knowledge* in uninterrupted succession from their fathers and from their fathers fathers up to the very time of the fact commemorated. Now the Israelites of any later period could be no more induced to admit such a self-contradicting falsehood; than the English of the present day could be brought to believe, both that Stonehenge was reared to commemorate a miraculous passage of the Normans across the dry bed of the British channel, and that they themselves had received this account of its origin and import in unbroken succession from father to son ever since the occurrence of that stupendous miracle. In each case, the ground of the impossibility is the very same: no man can be persuaded to believe, that he *always*

previously knew a matter, which is now for the first time communicated to him.

III. The important consequences, which necessarily flow from the point now established, are abundantly obvious.

1. If the Pentateuch were *the production of Moses*, and if therefore it *were written synchronically with the exodus of Israel and with their journey to Palestine*; every miracle, recorded as having taken place during that period, must inevitably be received as a real matter of fact.

The reason of this is so plain, that it need scarcely be pointed out. If the recorded miracles were ever performed; thousands must have been eye-witnesses of them, as well as Moses himself; if, on the other hand, they were never performed; they never could have been introduced into a history written *at the very time* when they are alleged to have taken place. Suppose none of the plagues of Egypt to have actually occurred; suppose the channel of the Red sea to have never been laid bare to the bottom; suppose the Israelites never to have been preternaturally fed during their abode in the wilderness; suppose the awful transactions of mount Sinai to be a mere fiction; suppose the sudden and predicted destruction of Korah and his company to be an idle tale; suppose no water to have been ever brought out of the arid rock; suppose the healing of the Israelites by a mere look upon the brazen serpent to be wholly devoid of truth; suppose the perpetually accompanying pillar of fire to be a gross and pal-

pable falsehood : suppose all this, and add various other parallel suppositions for which the Pentateuch will copiously furnish an ample basis ; and what will be the consequence, now that we have established the history *to have been written by Moses synchronically with the alleged events* ? If we deem every recorded miracle to be a fiction ; we shall in effect pledge ourselves to account, both for its insertion in the history, and for the zealous reception of that history by the contemporaneous Israelites though every individual of at the least a million of adults must have been satisfied by the direct evidence of his or her senses that the whole work was a tissue of impudent falsehoods. The admission of a supernatural interference *necessarily* follows the proof, that the Pentateuch was written in the days of Moses : nor can the admission be avoided, except by a demonstration that the Pentateuch was written long subsequent to that period.

In short, on the supposition that *no* miracles were performed, while yet it is found impossible to ascribe the uninterpolated Pentateuch to any author save Moses himself ; we may judge, how immeasurable must have been the astonishment of the Israelites, when they heard their lawgiver gravely address them out of his Epinomis in the following most extraordinary terms.

The Lord your God, which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes ; and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee as a man doth bear his son, in all the

way that ye went, until ye came into this place : who went in the way before you to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day.¹ Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life : but teach them thy sons and thy sons sons. Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me ; Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. And ye came near, and stood under the mountain : and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire : ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude ; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments ; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.² Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth : and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it ? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as thou hast heard, and live ?

¹ Deut. i. 30—33.² Deut. iv. 9—13.

Or hath God assayed to go, and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire, and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.¹ When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying; What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgements, which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: and the Lord shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: and he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers.² If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them? Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but thou shalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh and unto all Egypt; the great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby

¹ Deut. iv. 32—36.² Deut. vi. 20—23.

the Lord thy God brought thee out.¹ Thou shalt remember all the way, which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness : and he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not neither did thy fathers know ; that he might make thee know, that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years.² Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage ; who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions and drought, where there was no water ; who brought thee forth water out of a rock of flint ; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna.³ Keep the passover unto the Lord thy God : for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. For thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste ; that thou mayest remember the day, when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt, all the days of thy life.⁴

Nor less astonished must the Israelites, partly of this and partly of the next generation, have been, on the supposition that no miracles were wrought for the deliverance and preservation of the people, when they heard the parting address of

¹ Deut. vii. 17—19.² Deut. viii. 2—4.³ Deut. viii. 11, 14—16.⁴ Deut. xvi. 1, 3.

their great captain Joshua, who had himself been with Moses from the very day of the exodus.

And Joshua said unto all the people : Thus saith the Lord God of Israel ; Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor : and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac, Jacob and Esau ; and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it : but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them : and afterward I brought you out. And I brought your fathers out of Egypt : and ye came unto the sea ; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers ; with chariots and horsemen, unto the Red-sea. And, when they cried unto the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them : and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt. And ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season—Now therefore fear the Lord.¹

If then no miracles had been performed, and if consequently all the people knew that there was not a single syllable of truth in what their two leaders successively addressed to them : what effect must these extraordinary orations have produced ?

¹ Josh. xxiv. 2—7, 14:

Every Israelite must assuredly have thought, that Moses, and after him Joshua, were absolutely mad: every Israelite must have rejected, with inexpressible laughter, such strange appeals to themselves in regard to what they all knew to be completely false.

We are not positively informed, what reply the people made to Moses: but the continuator, who has subjoined the last chapter of the Pentateuch that so it might end with the death of the law-giver, assures us, that *the children of Israel wept for him in the plains of Moab thirty days*; and he adds, that *there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.*¹ The answer of the Israelites to Joshua is duly recorded. *God forbid, that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods. For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; and which did those great signs in our sight; and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed.*²

Still then upon the supposition that no miracles were wrought, what shall we think of this even

¹ Deut. xxxiv. 8, 10—12.

² Josh. xxiv. 16, 17.

more strange reply to a sufficiently strange oration? The speaker gravely reminds the people of certain miraculous events, which he describes as having very lately taken place : the people no less gravely acquiesce in the narration, without a single individual offering a word of contradiction : and yet, all the while, not a syllable of truth has been uttered on either side !

Such is the absurdity, which attends upon a denial of supernatural interference, after it has been shewn that *the Pentateuch cannot but have been written in the days of Moses* : and thus inevitably does the establishment of that last point involve an admission, that *both the exodus and the whole journey of the Israelites were distinguished by a series of the most stupendous miracles.*

2. But, if Moses were empowered to work the miracles recorded in the Pentateuch, he must have been a prophet sent of God : and, if he were a prophet sent of God, he must have received such a measure of inspiration as was sufficient to fit him for a due discharge of his important office. Here therefore we are brought to another grand result ; which, like the former, is a consequence necessarily flowing from the established point, that *the Pentateuch was written by Moses.*

If then the Pentateuch were written by the thaumaturgic and inspired prophet Moses, it must in effect be the word of God : and therefore, as every precept must have been dictated by infinite wisdom ; so there must have been an impossibility of error in any part of the historical narrative,

whether treating of events synchronical with the heaven-taught legislator, or detailing facts which preceded the age wherein he flourished.

Doubtless the Israelites, who were contemporaries of Moses, must, by tradition from their pious ancestors, have been acquainted with all the leading circumstances recorded in the early history of the Pentateuch. For, though I am inclined to follow the lengthened postdiluvian chronology of the Samaritan in preference to the short postdiluvian chronology of the Hebrew; still the time between Abraham and the deluge was such, that that awful catastrophè and the subsequent dispersion from Babel must have been perfectly familiar to him.¹ The Gentiles indeed themselves, to a much later age, preserved, in all main points, a sufficiently accurate remembrance of the flood: for they made it even one of the grand foundations of their extraordinary theological system. Much more then must Abraham have known the fact, when we consider both the period in which he flourished and the exactness with which his genealogy from Noah was preserved. But, as it has often been remarked, such was the longevity of the antediluvian patriarchs, that, in the possibility of oral communication, there is only a single middle link between Adam and Noah: for each of those personages might have conversed with one and the same intermediate connecting individual. Under such circumstances, the Israelites, in con-

¹ See my *Origin of Pagan Idol.* book vi. c. 2: § v. 5.

sequence of their being preserved from idolatry during the entire period between Abraham and Moses, would possess the patriarchal traditions in their plain historical form, undisguised by the fictions and symbols and allegories of the pagan hierophants.

Still however it is to be expected, that their accounts of these early matters would be characterized both by inaccuracies and additions and omissions. As yet, in the patriarchal Church, there was no inspired *written* word. That defect, since the world had now extensively apostatised into idolatry, was to be remedied upon the inauguration of a new and limited dispensation, which was appointed to be as a lamp shining in the midst of surrounding darkness. Moses therefore was enjoined to commit to *imperishable writing*, what had hitherto subsisted only in rapidly deteriorating tradition: and for this purpose, as God's prophet, he must have received such a measure of divine inspiration, as precluded in his narrative the possibility of error.

The reason is obvious: unless we admit this to have been the case; we shall be obliged to suppose, that the man, who was empowered to work miracles and to deliver from God himself a Law to the Israelites, was yet suffered to prefix to that inspired Law an uninspired and frequently erroneous history. Such an opinion however seems to involve a self-contradicting absurdity.

CHAP. V.

THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE PENTATEUCH DEMONSTRATED FROM THE EVIDENCE OF MIRACLES.

AN establishment of the position, that *the Pentateuch was written by Moses*, inevitably draws after it the position, that *the history which he gives of his own times is an authentic history*. For, as the author studiously courted publicity in his life-time, as his work was openly read to the people through a long series of generations from the very day of its original composition, as the matters recorded were not done in a corner, and as every contemporaneous Israelite must have been an adequate judge whether they occurred or not: it is abundantly clear, that no history, written by Moses or indeed by any person who flourished synchronically with him, could have been unreservedly adopted and afterwards have been zealously maintained; if, all the while, each individual, who left Egypt under his guidance, had had the testimony of his own senses that the whole

composition was a tissue of monstrous and extravagant falsehoods. The impossibility of such an occurrence is rendered yet more glaring by the consideration, that the Pentateuch of Moses not only contains a history of his own times, but that it likewise comprehends a code of national law both civil and ecclesiastical. Now it is utterly incredible, that the Israelites should so implicitly resign themselves to the guidance of a man, whose fabricated history of transactions, in which they themselves were immediately concerned, proved him to be an impudent impostor, as to receive from *his* hands, in his quality of God's prophet, both their religion and their statutes. No person, whose strangely incautious narrative thus immediately exposed his total disregard of truth, could have obtained the extraordinary ascendancy over his followers, which the very reception of the Law of Moses proves that remarkable person to have obtained over the Israelites.

The whole matter, in short, resolves itself into this single question : if the miraculous events, recorded by Moses as having taken place both in the day of the exodus and during the travels of the people in the wilderness, never really occurred; how did he persuade his contemporaries to receive a history as authentic, which boldly sets forth various gigantic falsehoods, and which absolutely appeals to themselves as knowing and owning these falsehoods to be realities ?

I see not how the question can possibly be answered by an unbeliever ; except either by main-

taining the history to have been the production of a much later age, or that the Israelites must have been imposed upon by certain tricks which their ignorance led them to mistake for miracles.

With respect to the history being the production of a later age, that point has already been so amply discussed that it need not here be resumed: before an infidel can be allowed to make such an assertion, he must undertake to confute, one by one, all the preceding arguments. I have only therefore at present to inquire, what probability there is for the supposition, that the Israelites were imposed upon by certain tricks, which the dexterity of Moses and his confederates persuaded them to receive as genuine miracles.

I. Ere this inquiry be prosecuted at large, it will be necessary, that the subject of it should be accurately stated.

It is the ordinary cant of unbelievers, that artful men in all ages have contrived to make dupes of their followers, that superstition has ever readily coöperated with imposture in persuading such followers that they beheld miracles, and that Moses was but one of the numerous political jugglers who at different periods have abused the credulity of the gaping and ignorant vulgar. Now, in the case of Moses, writers of this stamp may find it convenient to omit stating, that, of whatever description his miracles might be, those connected with the exodus produced the same conviction of their reality upon the oppressing Egyptians as upon the oppressed Israelites. Much as the latter

might *wish* to believe, from their impatience to be liberated from bondage : the former, we must recollect, were not the willing disciples, but the determined opponents, of Moses. Conviction therefore must have been *forced* upon *their* minds. They did not believe the miracles of the prophet, because their inclinations *prepared* them for deception, but because they awfully *felt* the effects which they produced. Nor can it be said, by way of evasion, that the Egyptians *voluntarily* expelled the Israelites ; a tale excogitated at a long subsequent period by Manetho and an interested priesthood : if *the Pentateuch were written by Moses*, the ground on which the present discussion must be allowed to proceed, until the arguments which establish that point shall have been confuted ; if *the Pentateuch* (I say) *were written by Moses*, however he might have deceived his contemporaries by false miracles, he could never have persuaded the Israelites to believe that the Egyptians *wished* for their departure when all the while they pertinaciously opposed it. Hence it is evident, that the miracles of Moses, if spurious, were nevertheless of such an extraordinary description, that they alike imposed upon the Israelites who sighed for freedom and upon the Egyptians who angrily and obstinately withheld it from them. By some means or other, he contrived to persuade both *friends* and *foes*, both those who might wish to believe and those who wanted neither will nor power to detect the imposture, that the appearances which he exhibited were real miracles.

This remark ought particularly to be borne in memory, while we consider those earliest wonders which at length so wrought upon the Egyptians as to wring from them a reluctant consent to the exodus.

1. The first miracle, wrought before Pharaoh and his courtiers, was the transmutation of Aaron's rod into a serpent: and the two next were the changing of the river into blood, and the bringing up of the frogs.

Instead of being influenced by such portents, the king seems to have argued within himself, that, as they were exhibited for the purpose of inducing him to dismiss the Israelites, if the magicians could display similar ones to enjoin the contrary, he might be fairly allowed to act in conformity with which miracles he pleased. He had recourse therefore to the Egyptian sorcerers; who likewise changed their rods into serpents, transmuted water into blood, and called up frogs.

(1.) Some persons, adopting the opinion of Justin Martyr, have supposed, that these deeds of the magicians were real miracles indeed, but that they were wrought by diabolical agency.¹ It seems to me however, that there is not sufficient reason for taking up such an hypothesis. We have no authority for admitting, that any *real* miracles can be wrought, save either immediately by God, or mediately by some ministering agent empowered by himself. Agreeably to this rational doctrine, it

¹ Justin. Martyr. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 229.

is easy to shew, that the miracles of the sorcerers were mere juggling tricks; while the wonders wrought by Moses were of such a nature, as to preclude the possibility of deception.

The apparent transmutation of a rod into a serpent would be no very difficult matter to an adept in what is called sleight of hand. It is well known, that serpents have been rendered perfectly tame and docile and innocuous: one of these animals therefore may easily have been concealed in the wide sleeve of each of the magicians, and may at the proper time have been dexterously substituted for the wand; a circumstance the more probable, because those impostors, having heard that Moses had exhibited this particular transmutation before the Israelites, would naturally expect a repetition of it before Pharaoh, and would prepare themselves accordingly. In a similar manner, when all the waters of Egypt were changed into blood, a small quantity of fresh water may have been procured by digging: and this, by the adroit infusion of a proper chemical mixture, may have been made to assume a sanguine colour. So again: when the whole land previously swarmed with frogs, it would require but little dexterity, first to clear a small space of ground from those reptiles, and then to call upon them to advance and fill it again: circumstanced as Egypt then was, the place, from which the frogs must have been driven before the pretended miracle of the sorcerers *could* be performed, would have been speed-

ily replenished by them whether invited or uninvited. It may be added; that, whatever juggling tricks the sorcerers contrived to exhibit, it exceeded all their power to counteract the influence of the two first plagues. They could neither command the Nile to become water again; nor could they drive away the frogs, with which the whole country was infested: Pharaoh was obliged to have recourse to Moses and Aaron, as the only persons capable of affording any relief.

Thus needless is it to call in the assistance of diabolical agency: and thus absurdly did Pharaoh act in placing the miracles of the sorcerers on the same footing with those of the appointed ministers of heaven.*

(2.) Here it may be asked, since the feats of the magicians are allowed to have been a mere deception; why may we not conclude, that the feats of Moses were equally a mere deception: and, as he performed various feats subsequent to the production of frogs, which they could not perform; why may we not account for this circumstance also by merely concluding, that the Hebrew was more skilled in the art of juggling than the Egyptians?

* See Graves's Lect. on the four last books of the Pent. Append. sect. ii. p. 375. *Though the devil, by his subtlety, says Bp. Stillingfleet, may easily impose upon spectators eyes; yet it was impossible for him, by any power of his own, to alter the course of nature or to produce any real miracle.* Orig. Sacr. book ii. c. 9. § 1.

An answer to this will readily be afforded, if we consider the peculiar mode and nature of the miracles ascribed to Moses.

With respect to the transmutation of Aaron's rod into a serpent, no doubt mere legerdemain might have produced this appearance, just as I suppose it to have been produced by the magicians: but by what art could Moses cause his brother's rod, when transformed into a serpent, to devour the serpents which had been substituted for the other rods? Here there could be no room for deception: but, even allowing that it might have been practised and that Moses in reality did but secrete the tame serpents of the sorcerers, can we suppose that those impostors were so ignorant of the usual tricks of their business as not immediately to have suspected the truth of the matter; and, suspecting it, would they not forthwith have demanded that Moses should be searched; and thus, on the supposition of his having secreted the serpents which he only pretended to have been devoured by his own, would not those reptiles obviously have been found upon him hidden beneath the folds of his robe? As for the other miracles in which the sorcerers affected to emulate him, still less could they have been effected by sleight of hand. The magicians, by mere legerdemain, might easily have caused a little water in a cup to assume the hue of blood; and, without any legerdemain, might have called the already swarming frogs to enter into a spot of ground which had been first cleared for the purpose.

But what deception could in an instant change the immense volume of the Nile into a ghastly stream of gore, and at the same moment incarnadine every well and pool throughout the whole country? What juggling trick could by a single word produce myriads of frogs, which should swarm in every corner of a land where immediately before there were none beyond the ordinary course of nature?

Neither in these, nor in any of the other plagues which the magicians were unable to imitate, was there room for deception on the one part or for the mere play of imagination on the other.

Thus, could the Egyptians *fancy*, that their river was changed into blood; either if it still retained both the appearance and the quality of common water, or if it happened to be tinged for a season with any reddish sort of earth? Could they *imagine*, that frogs infested the whole land, and that they penetrated even into Pharaoh's palace; when in reality nothing of the kind was to be seen, beyond those few accidental stragglers which may at any time appear? Could all the Egyptians agree with one consent to complain of being infested with lice and swarms of flies; when their usual scrupulous cleanliness effectually preserved them from the former, and when the latter existed only in the workings of a strong imagination? Could they *suppose*, that all their cattle died, and that they themselves were afflicted with boils; when the cattle were still alive, and when the men were in perfect good health? Could

they be so infatuated as to believe, that a most tremendous hail-storm took place, that they were suddenly plagued with locusts, and that they were instantaneously bewildered in a thick darkness; when nothing worthy of particular notice had happened? In fine, could they all concur in mourning for the loss of their first-born; when there had not been a single death, except such as occur in the ordinary course of nature?

Nor is this all: such calamities are not described, as having *simply* befallen the Egyptians; neither is it said, that they themselves, without any extraneous intimation, were led, by mere superstitious terror, to interpret them as a divine call to dismiss the Israelites. The plagues are represented, not only as occurring; but as occurring in consequence of a prophetic declaration, openly and unreservedly made, that they *would* occur instantaneously at a particular moment of time precisely defined.

Could any arts then of mere legerdemain cause all the Egyptians, in an instant and at a predetermined point of time, to be tormented with lice and flies and boils? Could they bring on, still at a previously specified moment, a murrain upon every beast, a tremendous general hail-storm, an immense army of locusts, and a thick darkness for the space of three whole days? Could they, in a single night, cause every first-born to die throughout the land, from the first-born of Pharaoh upon the throne to the first-born of the captive in prison, while all the other children remained in sound

health? Or, to crown the whole, could they remove such visitations, when capable of being removed, with the same facility, and with the same predetermined certainty as to the particular time, that they brought them on?

Surely the person, who can believe, that the miracles wrought by Moses and Aaron were nothing but a mere juggling deception, and that the effects produced by them were nothing but a strong delusion on the part of the Egyptians, maintains the occurrence of a much more wonderful and incredible miracle, than any of those recorded in the page of Scripture.

(3.) But it may be asked; why may we not suppose, that the history of these transactions has detailed them in a very exaggerated form? Why may we not conclude, that Moses dexterously availed himself of certain calamitous events, which at that period accidentally befel the Egyptians, to persuade so superstitious a people, that these were preternatural visitations by which the God Jehovah required the immediate liberation of the Israelites? Or why may we not reasonably conjecture, that those circumstances, which in reality might easily have been accounted for by natural means, grew up, in process of time, under the inventive pen of Moses and his successors, to their present bulk and incredibility?

In reply, it may be inquired, upon what principles of calculation could the ten Egyptian plagues have all occurred successively at the precise time when Moses declared that they *would* occur; even

allowing, that they might severally be accounted for on natural principles? An earthquake no doubt, when viewed *simply*, is a physical event: but, if a heaven-inspired prophet had foretold that on such a day the city of Lisbon should be destroyed by an earthquake as a punishment for its wickedness, and if the event punctually occurred at the precise time which had been specified; in that case, the earthquake, when thus viewed *concretely*, would to all intents and purposes be a miracle, for how incalculable is the chance that it should have occurred in an ordinary way at the exact moment when it was predicted. We must never forget, that the plagues of Egypt not only *occurred*, but that they occurred at the identical point of time when it had been *foretold that they should occur*.

Nor can the successive double predictions both of their occurrence and of their removal be conveniently disposed of, unless it can be first proved that the Pentateuch was *not* written synchronically with the events. If it were the work of Moses, and if from the very time of its composition it were publicly read to the people; as both the Pentateuch itself and the book of Joshua most abundantly testify: then it would have been plainly impossible to insert so gross a falsehood, as that Moses had openly threatened Pharaoh with the duly specified plagues *before* their occurrence, if no such prophetic denunciations had ever been uttered; and it would have been equally impossible to interpolate it at any succeeding period, because the whole people, well acquainted with the Pentateuch from

their very childhood, would immediately have detected the novel fraud.

Such being the case, as the plagues were all *predicted* events, an infidel will find himself little benefited by asserting *an exaggeration of circumstances*, unless at the same time he can account for the remarkable fact, that *any* calamitous events should occur *precisely when they were foretold* : and this fact of *prophetic denunciation* he cannot set aside, without previously demonstrating that the Pentateuch was *not* written and published in the age of Moses.

But, after all, what ground is there for *supposing* any exaggeration ? Could it be a *trifling* matter, a *slight* cause, which induced Pharaoh to dismiss the Israelites ; when we consider, how useful they were to him, and how very reluctant he was to part with them ? In reality, to suppose an exaggeration in the present case, is to suppose a direct contradiction. For let a single instance be taken. Moses, at his last interview with the king and ere he went out from his presence in a great anger, denounced the death of the first-born in the middle of the very next approaching night, in case Pharaoh should persist in his refusal.¹ Now, if in the event a few solitary individuals only had died, or if death had no way *peculiarly* visited the first-born more than any other of the Egyptian children though the season might *in general* be somewhat unhealthy : we may be very sure, that no consent to the de-

¹ Exod. xi. 4—8.

parture of Israel would have been granted, and that Moses himself would have been ridiculed and punished as a convicted impostor. But such consent *was* granted. Therefore the threat of Moses must have been punctually fulfilled. In other words, an exaggeration of circumstances is plainly impossible.

2. After the Israelites had quitted Egypt, the Red-sea, we are told, opened to them a free passage through its waters : but, when Pharaoh and his host rashly pursued them into the channel now miraculously laid bare, the waves, no longer upheld by a divine force, returned to their wonted bed, and thus consigned the pursuers to immediate destruction.¹

No miracle, recorded in Scripture, has more experienced the cavils of infidelity than this which is at present before us : and, as it has already been observed, the passage of Alexander under the Pamphylian mountain has ever been a favourite theme with those, who would fain account for the transit of the Red sea by natural means. The perfect dissimilitude of the two cases I have sufficiently pointed out : more therefore need not be said on *that* part of the subject. I shall merely consider, how far natural causes will suffice to explain the facts, recorded by Moses in a volume publicly and unreservedly read to all Israel, appealed to by Joshua as universally known, and confessed by the unanimous voice of the people to have really oc-

¹ Exod. xiv.

curred. The two main facts are these : *the unwieldy host of Israel, encumbered with women and children and baggage and cattle, passed dry-shod and without difficulty over some part of the bed of the Red-sea : but the light host of Egypt, consisting altogether of cavalry or of warriors borne in chariots, attempted to pursue them by the same route ; and, in making the attempt, universally perished, both man and horse, by a sudden reflux of the waters to their recently deserted channel.*

These are the two facts to be accounted for : and the common expedient to which infidels resort, is this. The Israelites are supposed to have taken advantage of some unusually great ebb of the sea, produced in part by a strong north wind ; and thus to have passed across the sands at the very extremity of the western gulf : while the Egyptians, eagerly pursuing them by the same track, were suddenly overtaken by the flow of the waters, and were thus drowned before they could accomplish their transit.

Let us for a moment suppose, that this is the true method of accounting for the facts ; and let us observe, what will be the consequence. Every individual in the whole host of Israel must have perceived at once, that, in the whole affair from beginning to end, there was nothing miraculous whatsoever. Hence Moses could no more have persuaded them, in direct opposition to the evidence of their own senses, that God had preternaturally interposed in their behalf ; than Alexander could

have persuaded his Greeks, that a miracle had been wrought to enable them to pass round the foot of the Pamphylian mountain. Yet we actually find the Israelites to a man firmly believing, that a most stupendous miracle had been wrought, and receiving as undoubted truth the extraordinary narrative which Moses gives of a very simple transaction. How happened it, that not one more sagacious than his fellows ridiculed the whole of this pretended miracle? But why speak I of sagacity? Let us try to convince the veriest clown upon the face of the earth, who has safely passed an inlet of the sea at low water, while his neighbour an hour after him has been unfortunately drowned by too late attempting the same passage: let us try to convince this man, that a double miracle of mercy and of judgment has been specially wrought in the cases of himself and his neighbour; and what would be our success? His general ignorance would not prevent his distinctly perceiving, that what we said was absolute mockery: and, instead of satisfying him that he had witnessed a miracle, we should only, in case of our persevering in the attack, soon produce a very evident diminution of his equanimity. Yet, in the case of the Israelites, not a solitary enthusiastic individual; but a host of two millions is most unaccountably convinced, that a stupendous miracle has been wrought in their favour; merely, forsooth, because they timed their passage over the sands more judiciously than the Egyptians.

But, after all, such a method of solving the difficulty is in no one point either satisfactory in itself or reconcilable with the history.

None of these *sudden* recesses and refluxes of the Red sea, sufficient to allow an armament like that of Israel to pass in safety and then most opportunely to return and drown the Egyptians, have ever been either seen or heard of: and it is a most extraordinary thing, that the occurrence should take place *precisely* when it was wanted by the Hebrews, and never afterwards. With what patient complaisance must the sea have waited the transit of two millions of individuals, with all their baggage and cattle; and then, with what speciality of accommodation, must it suddenly have returned at the precise nick of time, when the safety of those individuals required the submersion of their pursuers! If such movements of the neighbouring gulf were once common, though now somewhat uncommon, the physiological Egyptians must have been well acquainted with them: and it is not very easy to believe, that a squadron of warriors, when they found the tide rising and when they well knew that a passage was therefore no longer practicable, should yet madly attempt what, even if accomplished, could stand them in very little stead. For suppose the transit of Israel to have taken place at the extreme tongue of the Red sea, by the mere falling of the tide; their direct line of march could scarcely have saved them more than a dozen or twenty miles of circuit at the utmost. Such being the case, their pursuers, instead of following

them into the now rising sea, would obviously have preferred the safe and circuitous route: for, *they* being cavalry while *the Israelites* were an unwieldy mass of infantry, so slight a deviation from the direct line would scarcely have been felt; or, at any rate, it could not have retarded more than a few hours the intended destruction of the fugitives. Allowing therefore the very utmost both to tides and to the north-wind, blowing just as long as it ought to blow and ceasing at the precise moment when the Israelites wished it to cease; we have still nothing that will satisfactorily account for the facts recorded by Moses. If such a mixed multitude as that of Israel could pass over in safety; it is incredible, that a well appointed body of cavalry should *immediately afterwards* find the transit so impracticable as to perish in the attempt.

It is almost superfluous however to argue the present question: for, both the Mosaical narrative, and the natural form of the country, prove that the passage of Israel could not have been accomplished at the extreme northern termination of the gulf. Moses describes the people, as being *intangled in the land*; and represents them, as so encamping between Migdol and the sea, that they were close upon the mouth or aperture, of Hiroth and immediately over-against Baal-Zephon on the opposite side of the water.¹ Now to this geographical picture the extreme northern termination of the gulf does not at all answer. The Israelites would

¹ Exod. xiv. 2, 3, 9.

not *there* have been intangled in the land : neither does the top of the gulf present any mouth or aperture from the sea through the mountains, which in any respect corresponds with the mouth of Hiroth. In *this* quarter therefore it is vain to look for the place of the transit. But lower down the bay we find a situation, which in every respect corresponds with the narrative of Moses. A traveller, passing southward from the extremity of the bay, has the sea on his left hand and a succession of precipitous crags on his right, until he arrives at the aperture through the mountains, by the Greeks denominated *Chysma*, by the Arabs *Colsum* and *Bede*. This aperture, as both its name and its physiology unite in testifying, was once a creek floated with water ; though, by the well-known gradual recess of the Red sea, it is now left a dry glen : and both its own and the general locality of the whole region decidedly prove it to be the scriptural Pi-hahiroth. The Israelites then, following the course which I have mentioned, would, upon their encampment before this aperture, be completely *intangled in the land* ; agreeably to the very accurate description which Moses gives of their situation : for before them they would have the then deep and impassable creek of Hiroth, on their right hand a range of impracticable crags, and on their left the waters of the Red sea ; while behind them the Egyptians were seen, pressing rapidly down the defile into which Moses had previously conducted his followers. Here then, by the united testimony both of geography and of the narrative itself, must have

been the place of the transit. But the gulf, at this point, is twelve miles broad ; and, in the time of Diodorus, it was three fathoms deep. Hence it is evident, that nothing, except a proper miracle, could have conveyed the Israelites across such a channel. For deception there was no room. Every individual must have known, from the bare evidence of his senses, whether he did or did not cross the channel. If no such transit had been accomplished, neither Moses nor any other man could have persuaded the whole armament of Israel that it *had* been accomplished. But it clearly *was* accomplished by *some* means : for otherwise the Israelites must have been destroyed by the incensed Egyptians, and could never have escaped into the wilderness of Horeb. How then is the difficulty to be solved, if we deny the miracle ? Admit only the miracle, and every thing is easy and consistent. The very form of the ground had thrown the Israelites into a long line. When they faced therefore to the left, and when the sea opened for the whole extent of their company ; by marching in rank, they would require no very great space of time to cross it : whereas, if they had marched in file through a narrow aperture of the sea, an armament of two millions with their baggage and cattle must have needed many days for their transit. Such then was the mode of transit on the part of Israel. But the wonder is, how the Egyptians could have been so mad as to follow them. For this the narrative most amply accounts. In the first place, we are told, that their hearts were ju-

cially hardened, so that they acted as if bereft of common sense : and, in the second place, they seem for a time at least not to have been conscious whither they were going. The transit was itself accomplished in the night : and, while the miraculous pillar of fire gave light to the Israelites ; the cloud, which accompanied it, spreading as a curtain over the rear of the fugitives, tenfold increased the horrors of darkness to the Egyptians. As the morning began to break, they found at length where they were, even upon the slimy bottom of the deep ; and they forthwith sought to effect their retreat : but it was now too late ; the rod of Moses was again extended over the channel from the eastern shore ; and they were instantaneously overwhelmed by the returning waters.

Such was the famous miracle of the transit : a miracle, which admits not of deception as described by Moses, and which never could have been believed by the Israelites unless it had actually occurred ; a miracle therefore, which can neither be controverted nor explained away, unless it can be first demonstrated that the Pentateuch was written long after the event.

3. On the same principles, the miraculous support of the numerous Israelites with all their cattle in the wilderness, during a period of forty years, could not possibly be the effect of deception.

The men must have known whether they were fed or not ; and it is irrefragably clear, that without food they could not have been sustained. Whence then did Moses procure it, if it were not

furnished supernaturally? Admit the Pentateuch to have been written by himself, and to have been unreservedly communicated to all the people; and we shall immediately perceive, that he could never have persuaded his contemporaries to admit *that* as a true history, which *told* them indeed that they were daily fed with bread from heaven, but which *really* left them to all the horrors of uncontroled famine. Nor will the matter be improved, if it be urged, that they were *not* forty years in the wilderness, but that they marched rapidly across it with great loss into Palestine. Under such circumstances, supposing the history to have been written synchronically with the events (a point already demonstrated); how could Moses dare to assure the whole people, that they wandered forty years in the wilderness miraculously supported from heaven, and that the whole generation which came out of Egypt had died there save Caleb and Joshua, when all the while they knew that there was not a single syllable of truth in the whole matter?

4. Just the same remark may be made upon the delivery of the Law from the summit of mount Sinai.

If it should be baply contended, that the appearance which the hill then exhibited was volcanic, and that Moses artfully availed himself of an accidental circumstance to usher his code into the world with a supernatural dignity: I see not what would be gained by the supposition, unless it could be previously demonstrated that the Pentateuch was the work of a comparatively modern period.

Granting that the phenomenon *was* volcanic; what then? The entire transaction is not less a miracle, because God may have pleased subordnately to employ natural causes. We are to observe, that the phenomenon was publicly announced to the whole people three days before its occurrence.* This fact could never have been recorded in a synchronical public history, if every Israelite knew that he had never received a word of previous warning. But, if the warning were duly given, how could Moses pretend to say, that a sleeping volcano would begin to be in operation exactly within three days?

Let us suppose however, that from some observations Moses anticipated a speedy eruption, that he ventured to fix three days for the time of its occurrence, and that his lucky guess was seasonably honoured by fortune: we shall still have accomplished not more than half of our explanatory undertaking. How was the voice produced, which audibly summoned Moses to the top of the burning mount? How did he ascend the summit of an active volcano in the sight of all the people, and remain there forty days, without perishing? How came the whole body of the Israelites to hear distinctly rehearsed, from out of the fire and the thick cloud, the ten commandments? Whether Sinai be volcanic or not, such circumstances could never have attended the ordinary eruption of a volcano: nor could Moses have dared to record

* Exod. xix. 11.

them in his history and to appeal to the whole nation for his veracity, if nothing had occurred beyond what may be accounted for by natural causes.

In this manner we may fairly argue, as a great writer *has* argued in the case of the fiery globes, which are acknowledged even by a pagan historian to have burst forth from the foundations of the temple in the days of Julian: in this manner (I say) we may fairly argue, even if we admit Sinai to have been a then active though now extinct volcano. But, according to the account given of that region by an intelligent traveller, there seem to be no grounds for adopting any such opinion. Without professing to have studied petralogy, I have yet always understood, that a volcanic district may be clearly ascertained, long after the extinction of its fires, by tufo, pumice, lava, obsidian, and (as some contend) basalt. Now, according to Mr. Niebuhr, the chain of mountains, to which Sinai belongs, are *masses of a sort of limestone intermingled with veins of granite. In several places through them, he adds, I discovered a quantity of petrified shells, of a species, which is to be found with the living shell-fish in it in the Arabic gulf. One of those hills is entirely covered with flints. The granite becomes more and more plentiful, as we approach mount Sinai.*' Here then, if I mistake not, we have no indications of a volcanic region. Consequently, no part of the awful appearances, which presented themselves on the summit of the mount,

* Niebuhr's Trav. sect. vi. c. 5. p. 186.

and which were openly displayed before the whole multitude of the Israelites, can be satisfactorily ascribed to second causes : though, even if that could have been done, the whole transaction, as detailed in the public narrative of Moses, would not on that account have been the less miraculous.

5. It were easy to discuss the other miracles, which are recorded as having taken place during the abode of Israel in the wilderness, after the same manner as those which have been already considered : but such a lengthened discussion, after the preceding observations, seems to be plainly superfluous. Instead therefore of prosecuting the subject with wearisome prolixity, I would rather point out a very remarkable peculiarity in the historical narrative of the Hebrew legislator.

The miracles, which it records, are not mere specious wonders, introduced for the purpose of decoration, and capable of being admitted or rejected at pleasure by one who generally acknowledges Moses to be a faithful writer in all *ordinary* leading facts : on the contrary, they are so essentially necessary to the history itself, that without them the narrative stands still and is absolutely unable to proceed. We no way require the pretended appearance of the Dioscuri to secure the victory to a Roman general. The story will go on, and the battle will be won, just as well, if we deny the vision of the celestial cavaliers, as if we believe it. But this is not the case with the miracles, which Moses records as having occurred during the period in which he flourished. The Israel-

ites are pursued by the Egyptians to a defile so circumstanced, that it was impossible for them to escape into the wilderness except by crossing a broad and deep arm of the sea. According to the history, a miracle was wrought, that their transit might be effected : and by what other means shall we contrive to transport two millions of individuals, with their baggage and cattle, over a channel twelve miles broad and three fathoms deep ? When arrived on the opposite shore, instead of making the best of their way to a fertile country, they plunge into the heart of the wilderness ; where the entire nation remains forty years, where all who had come out of Egypt save a few excepted individuals die for the most part in the ordinary course of nature, and where an entirely new generation is born and brought up. According to the history, a standing miracle supplied them both with meat and with drink during the whole period of their abode in the desert : and by what other expedient shall we manage to support such a multitude so circumstanced ? If the narrative be admitted, the miracles must also be admitted : the two cannot be separated from each other. Let us reject the miracles ; and we shall find it absolutely necessary to reject, or at least to new-model, the narrative. But, if the history were written by Moses himself and publicly read to the whole people during his own life-time, a point already enough established ; how could he persuade his contemporaries to receive unanimously, as an authentic account of their transactions, what was all the while a tisse of

fables, and what they themselves knew to be such?

II. Thus, partly from the now established position that the Pentateuch was written and made public in the days of Moses, and partly from the impossibility of the miracles recorded being pretended miracles, we arrive at the conclusion, that his divine legation was supernaturally attested by the immediate finger of God.

The mission then of the Hebrew lawgiver possesses the evidence of undoubted miracles. But undoubted miracles can be wrought only by a power specially derived from God. We may be certain however, that God would never enable a man to work real miracles for the purpose of establishing an imposture. Therefore from God must Moses have received both his power of working miracles and his commission to reveal the will of heaven to the Israelites.

The sophism of a well-known infidel writer, as to the evidence afforded by miracles, has always appeared to me so puerile, as scarcely to merit a serious confutation. He argues, that, as experience is the basis of our knowledge, whatever testimony contradicts our experience cannot be admitted: because, by the law of evidence, it will always be more probable that the testimony should be false or erroneous, than that our experience should be contravened. But we can none of us say, that we have had absolute experience of a miracle: or, even if any individual or individuals should assert this to have been the case with themselves, their

experience would contradict the universal experience of mankind. Therefore it is more likely, that any testimony to a miracle should be false or erroneous, than that universal experience should have been contravened by its occurrence.

It is not difficult to shew the futility of this quibble, even upon its own avowed principles.

If the secret of compounding gunpowder had perished by the accidental death of its discoverer, immediately after its extraordinary powers had been exhibited before a hundred competent witnesses; on the principles of the sophism now before us, the fact of its extraordinary powers must immediately be rejected as a manifest falsehood. For, that a small black powder should possess such powers, contradicts the universal experience of mankind. The attestation therefore of the hundred witnesses plainly contradicts universal experience. But it is more probable, that these hundred witnesses should be liars, than that the universal experience of mankind should be contravened. Therefore the pretended black powder possessed no such extraordinary powers, as those which these false witnesses would fain ascribe to it.

Now, if we try the miracles of the Hebrew law-giver by the same rule, we shall find ourselves brought to the following alternative.

Since the Pentateuch was written and made public in the days of Moses, either the miracles there recorded must have been actually performed; or a vast multitude must have been persuaded to acknowledge, that they really beheld with their

own eyes deeds impracticable by any human power, when yet they themselves knew that no such deeds had ever been done.

On the principle of the sophism in short, if all the inhabitants of London were to testify with one voice, that the Thames had been miraculously cloven asunder by the word of the sovereign, that they marched over its bed dry-shod, and that when their transit was effected a second word of the sovereign called back the waters to their accustomed channel : let them all testify this miracle as long and as vehemently as they please, on the philosophical principle of the sophism, no individual, beyond the inhabitants themselves, ought to believe a single syllable of their testimony. For the miracle itself is contrary to universal experience. Therefore it is more probable, that the million of witnesses should be liars, than that the miracle should ever have taken place. Consequently, it is certain, that no such miracle was ever wrought.

It is very possible, that this conclusion may be strictly philosophical : but it is not unlikely after all, that plain common sense would lead the bulk of us to credit the million of witnesses and to believe that a passage had really been opened for them through the midst of the river. In fact, we should think it more improbable, that a million of persons should unanimously concur in attesting so strange a fact, than that the alleged fact itself should be a mere falsehood.

CHAP. VI.

THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE PENTATEUCH DEMONSTRATED FROM THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROPHECY.

HOWEVER strong the evidence of miracles may be to those, who have actually seen them performed; it never can bear with the same overwhelming force upon the minds of those, who only receive an account of them through the medium of historical narrative. For, notwithstanding the reality of their performance may have been ascertained by the highest degree of moral demonstration; so that, if this be doubted, we shall find ourselves equally compelled to doubt every recorded fact, however well authenticated, of which we have not been absolute eye-witnesses: still, from the very nature of things, the impression effected by moral demonstration can never be so vivid as that which is produced by the sense of hearing or seeing. Under these circumstances, that nothing may be wanting to a full authentication of the Pentateuch, while the miracles wrought by Moses incontrovertibly attested

his divine commission to those who beheld them; the prophecies which he has delivered no less attest it to those who have witnessed their accomplishment.

This last sort of evidence is germinant: and so admirably has it been contrived by the wisdom of God, that, in proportion as the lapse of ages might seem to weaken the argument derived from long since performed miracles, that very lapse serves only to strengthen the argument derived from the completion of prophecy.

I. To understand the force of this last argument; it will be useful to consider, how far mere human wisdom can penetrate into futurity, and at what point an insurmountable barrier is opposed to its efforts.

Now it cannot be doubted, that the bare intellect of an experienced politician, who has long been accustomed to weigh causes and effects, who has deeply studied human nature, and who is thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances and interests and tempers both of his own community and of those who are his neighbours, will frequently anticipate events with a sagacity which bears some resemblance to direct prescience. But, though his anticipations will often be realized, yet even he himself could not build upon them with any *positive* certainty: and others, who had similar advantages of information, might, by a similar process of the mind perfectly intelligible to those who had habituated themselves to such reasonable guesses, have been brought to the very same results. As the principle

therefore of these speculations is easily understood; so it is manifest, that they can never extend beyond the applicability of the principle itself: that is to say, a wise politician may look into futurity, just so far as he can deduce probable effects from a combination of already well known causes. His prescience, in short, bears a close resemblance to that of an experienced general or a skilful chess-player. Judging how he himself, were he in his adversary's place, would act in consequence of one of his own movements, he builds upon his adversary's acting in the same manner when placed in the same circumstances: and thence, on the presumption of his thus acting, he provides against what he foresees must be the result of it; anticipating in this manner the final winding up of the affair, even when he is at a considerable distance from its termination.

Prescience then of the present description will extend, just so far as the principle upon which it is built. But the deducing of effects from a combination of causes can never be carried forward to any very remote period: because new causes, which themselves again must be combined, will perpetually spring up; and consequently, as those new causes are as yet unknown, no human sagacity can deduce effects from *such* causes.

II. What we have to consider therefore at present is this: whether the prophecies of Moses, recorded in the Pentateuch, are merely such anticipations of the future, as a wise politician might have made without any preternatural assistance; or whether they be of so remarkable a description, that

the fact of their accomplishment requires us to call in the aid of a God to solve the difficulty.

In the present inquiry, we have obviously no concern with those predictions of *other* men which have been handed down to us by Moses: for the accuracy of *their* accomplishment will not prove the divine commission of the *Hebrew* legislator; because it is very easy for an impostor, as we have a pregnant instance in the case of Mohammed, to interweave fragments of genuine revelation with his own earth-born productions. So far as the evidence from prophecy is concerned, the claims of Moses must be tried by the completion of *his own* prophecies.

1. Immediately before the entrance of the Israelites into the promised land, and subsequently to the full delivering of the Law, Moses ventured to foretell, as Balaam had done before him, that *Israel should dwell alone*.* Now, even supposing that he borrowed this prediction from Balaam, still, by adopting it as his own, he risked his own credit upon it: so that, if it had not been accomplished, he would have stood convicted of being a false prophet, just as much as Balaam himself. The accuracy of its completion I need scarcely point out: the only question therefore is, whether such a circumstance might have been safely anticipated by mere political sagacity.

It has been well remarked by Maimonides and various other writers, that many of the institutes of

* Deut. xxxiii. 28. Numb. xxiii. 9.

Moses are so contrived, as to have in themselves a natural tendency to produce a separation between the Israelites and all other nations. This separation accordingly they *did* produce : and the wall of partition was strengthened by the very means, which were used to build it up. The Jews, deeming themselves a peculiar people, despised the idolatrous Gentiles : and the Gentiles, in return, disgusted with what they considered the strange unsocial humour of the Jews, hated them as a race of professed misanthropic atheists. This mutual feeling, and the principle whence it originated, are set forth in a very striking manner by Tacitus. *Moses, says he, in order that he might bind the nation more strongly to himself, enjoined upon them the use of new rites, which were contrary to those of all other mortals. Hence, what we hold to be sacred, they esteem profane : and the things, which to us are impious, to them are perfectly lawful. But, however they came to adopt such institutes, they defend them on the plea of antiquity : and they readily admit as a proselyte every worthless wretch, who has been tempted to abjure the religion of his forefathers. The natural consequence of their peculiarities is this : that, while they display much fidelity and even affection for each other, they exhibit towards all the rest of mankind the hatred of the most inveterate enemies.* As this separation then was the obvious result of the institutes in the way of effect and cause, it may be

said, that no inspiration was necessary to enable Moses to foretell that Israel should dwell alone. He gave them statutes, which in themselves would inevitably lead to such a consequence : and, foreseeing that consequence with the eye of a politician, he confidently predicted it in the affected language of an inspired prophet.

Such an objection is sufficiently plausible : yet it admits of no very difficult answer ; for it may be easily shewn, that no mere politician could have safely foretold, from the peculiarity of his statutes alone, that the people, over which he presided, would never cease to be separate from all other nations.

If the separation flowed *solely* from the nature of the statutes, the legislator might no doubt have anticipated such an effect from such a cause : but, in that case, how could he be certain that his statutes would be of perpetual observation ? The worship of the true God was enjoined upon Adam and all his posterity : yet, in the course of very few generations, they had so universally corrupted themselves, that sincere piety was confined within the narrow limits of a single family. After the deluge, mankind, so far as religion was concerned, were brought back to the Adamitical state : but how long did they persevere in their attachment to sound theology, even when it had been inculcated upon them by the terrific destruction of a world ? A very few generations more witnessed the rise of idolatry : and so universal was the contagion, that, when Abraham was specially called of God, even

his family in the favoured line of Shem had been deeply infected.' Now, with such facts before his eyes, on what principle could Moses so confidently anticipate the perpetuity of his own statutes, as to risque a prediction, that Israel should be characterized by dwelling alone? Grant indeed the incessant observance of the statutes, and grant additionally (what is no less necessary) the incessant prevalence of idolatry throughout the rest of the world; and a remarkable separation might then be anticipated: but how could any mere uninspired legislator be certain, either that his statutes *would* be incessantly observed, or that idolatry *would* always prevail among the Gentiles? Supposing the separation to flow *solely* from the nature of the statutes, which (as Tacitus observes) had a direct tendency to alienate the Jews from the idolatrous Pagans; then it is manifest, that, either if the Jews approximated to the Pagans by relinquishing those statutes, or if the Pagans approximated to the Jews by relinquishing their idolatry, the cause of separation would cease to exist: and it must have been utterly impossible for any mere politician to pronounce beforehand, either that the Jews would always observe the statutes, or that the Gentiles would always persevere in their idolatry.

But, in truth, though the statutes had doubtless a *tendency* to produce this separation, history has demonstrated, that it cannot be ascribed *solely* to the statutes: and, if Moses were a mere politician,

it is on that ground *alone* that he can be supposed to have so clearly foreseen that Israel should dwell apart from the rest of mankind. Unsocial as the Jews might appear to Tacitus, and plausibly as he might reason from their institutes to their temper; such was by no means the character of their forefathers. Instead of abhorring the society of idolaters, the early Israelites notoriously affected it: inasmuch that their whole history, from the time of their settlement as a nation down to their deportation into Assyria and Chaldæa, is little more than a history of repeated apostasies to the false worship and nefarious practices of the Gentiles. Under such circumstances then, how can the alienating statutes be said to have efficaciously operated, agreeably to the sagacious prevision of Moses, when they were perpetually transgressed? And indeed why should Moses himself anticipate any other, than their perpetual transgression and their final complete abrogation, when he himself in the wilderness had so often witnessed the tendency of the people to mingle among the heathen and to learn their ways? In fact, so far from his anticipating their permanent separation *through the powerful efficacy of the statutes*, the only ground upon which as a mere statesman he could have foretold it: he absolutely expected the very contrary to a due and regular observance of them; and yet, notwithstanding this *avowed* expectation, he still ventured to foretell that through all ages Israel should dwell alone. *I know, that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves and turn aside*

*from the way which I have commanded you : and evil will befall you in the latter days ; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.*¹ Yet, after this declaration, which I readily grant that any mere statesman might very rationally have made, Moses foretells a characteristic of Israel, which, as a statesman, he could only have foretold on the double presumption, that his statutes would never cease to be observed and that the Gentiles would never relinquish their idolatry. Nor is this all : in the prophecy before us, the Hebrew legislator, agreeably to what we esteem the extent of his inspiration, has been found indeed to foretell the truth, yet he has not foretold the *whole* truth, *Israel* is to dwell alone throughout all ages, but he is not to dwell alone in the persons of *all* his posterity. This last particular is not touched upon by Moses : yet, if he only foretold effects by a deep knowledge of causes, it is impossible to say, why a part of Israel should cease to dwell alone, and why another part should still continue to do so even to the present day. How came the ten tribes to be swallowed up and lost among the Gentiles, as Ammon and Moab and Edom have been lost ; while the three tribes, like the fabled Titaresius, have flowed through the mystical waters of Babylon without any commixture ? Perhaps it may be said, that the ten tribes were swallowed up because they forsook the alienating statutes. Be

¹ Deut. xxxi. 29.

it so: but why then were not the three tribes equally swallowed up for the same reason? Their perpetual lapsing into idolatry was the avowed cause of the Babylonian captivity: and yet, no sooner had they been deported from their own country and therefore brought into much more immediate contact with idolaters than they had hitherto been; when, unlike their brethren of the ten tribes, they then first adopted that unsocial humour as it appeared to the Gentiles, which, with some Hellenizing exceptions, so strongly characterized them down to the time of Tacitus. Thus it is evident, that neither their observance nor their breach of the alienating statutes at all affected their predicted peculiarity of being a people that should dwell alone: whether they adhered to them, or whether they broke them, still they were equally preserved a distinct and separate nation, while the most powerful empires were successively losing their individuality.

As little was this peculiarity affected by the abjuration of idolatry on the part of the Gentiles. Since the statutes had no doubt, even in themselves, a tendency to keep the Jews separate from the Pagans; if the operation of these statutes were the *sole* cause of Israel's dwelling alone (a cause, the effects of which might have been anticipated by a sagacious politician), then of course, when the Pagans *renounced* their Paganism and with it those peculiar customs and ordinances which prevented their amalgamation with the Jews, the mere statesman's cause of separation would be

at an end, and he could no longer expect from it the same effects as what it had hitherto produced. Yet, notwithstanding the alleged cause has ceased to operate; notwithstanding those gentile rites, which appeared to Tacitus so contrary to the institutes of the Jews as inevitably to preclude the possibility of any commixture, have long since vanished throughout a large portion of the countries which they now inhabit: we find, in the course of God's providence, that, although coming in daily immediate contact with the Gentiles by reason of their dispersion among them, they still dwell just as much alone a completely separate people, as when their own institutes and the idolatrous rites of the Gentiles were the powerful mutual repellents which effectually kept them asunder.

Thus we see, that the only cause, on which a sagaciously provident statesman might have ventured to hazard a prediction that Israel should be characterized by dwelling alone, did in fact not operate at all during the greatest part of the time that the Hebrew commonwealth existed; for the people, instead of feeling any dislike to the Pagans on account of the contrariety of heathen practices to their institutes, were incessantly given to transgress their own institutes that so they might assimilate themselves to their idolatrous neighbours; and we further see, that this same cause has now throughout a large portion of the world become altogether a dead letter; for, in Christian and Mohammedan countries, the rites, against which

those institutes are directed, exist no more. Hence it is manifest, that the mere sagacity of a wise politician, regularly calculating their due effects from adequate causes, is wholly insufficient to account for the exact accomplishment of a prophecy, that Israel should ever be distinguished by dwelling alone; while the individuality of other nations, however powerful for a time, should be repeatedly lost in the course of changes and revolutions. But, if the mere sagacity of a politician be plainly insufficient to account for the accomplishment of the prophecy; I see not, how it can be accounted for, except by the acknowledgment that Moses was divinely inspired to foretell this striking characteristic of Israel. If however he were divinely inspired to foretell this characteristic of Israel; then the whole Pentateuch must rest on the direct authority of God: because, otherwise, we cannot escape the incongruity of supposing, that God enabled an impostor to deliver a prophecy, which, by its accurate accomplishment, directly went to establish a basely fabricated code as an authentic divine revelation.

2. Moses, we may further observe, not only predicts, that Israel should dwell alone, and that he should never lose his national individuality: he likewise foretells, what might seem *a priori* to render the accomplishment of the other prophecy nearly impossible, that the people, in consequence of their forsaking the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, should be rooted out of their own land and cast into another land; that they should

even be scattered among all nations, from the one end of the earth to the other; that, among these nations, they should find no ease; that the Lord should give them there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind; that they should become an astonishment and a proverb and a by-word among all nations, whither the Lord should send them; and that these awful judgments should be upon them and upon their seed, for a sign and for a wonder.*

To point out the minute accomplishment of the prophecy now before us, may well be deemed superfluous: for we may behold its completion with our own eyes; no laborious sifting of evidence is here necessary; the facts are as present and as palpable as the existence of the sun and the moon. What we have to do, is to account rationally for the naked circumstance of the exact accomplishment of the prediction.

Now it is evidently impossible to account for the circumstance on any grounds, except the one or the other of the two following.

Either Moses, as a mere politician, by the careful weighing of causes, ventured to foretell these matters; a thing, which any statesman of equal sagacity might have equally done.

Or, if it be utterly inconceivable how bare human wisdom could have looked thus deeply into futurity, he must have supernaturally received this wonderfully accurate knowledge of remote events

* Deut. xxix. 25, 27. xxviii. 64, 65, 66, 37, 46.

from divine inspiration : for to God alone can be ascribed the power of actual infallible prescience.

(1.) With respect to the first part of the alternative, if we contend that Moses was a mere uninspired politician, who, like many other uninspired politicians, had a deep insight into futurity by the simple process of deducing effects from causes : we then of course pledge ourselves to point out, by what irraginable train of reasoning from cause to effect, the Hebrew legislator was enabled, many ages before the event, to foretell such extraordinary things of his people with so much certainty and precision.

What then were the causes existing in the days of Moses, from which he was enabled sagaciously to deduce the effects which we now with our own eyes actually behold ? On what merely human principles did he so confidently pronounce, that the people, for which he undertook to legislate, would be torn away from their own land, would be scattered among all nations, and would be so universally despised as to become a proverb and a by-word ? Even had these particulars been accomplished shortly after the death of Moses, it would still be no easy matter to say, how he had thus certainly anticipated them in the way of effects naturally flowing from some then existent causes. But, as their earliest completion did not take place until the days of Hoshea and Zedekiah, the last reigning kings of Israel and Judah ; and as their grand completion did not take place until after the death of Christ : that is to say, as the events fore-

told did not occur until many centuries after the time of Moses: it is manifestly impossible, that he could infallibly have foreseen their accomplishment, by arguing from some potent causes; which even in his days, it were easy to perceive, had a sure tendency to produce such effects.

As Moses could not have foreseen these events from any particular causes then existing; so neither could he have ventured to foretell them, as things, either in themselves or from ordinary political analogy, very likely sooner or later to happen. A legislator, who had given to his people wise statutes, which, if duly observed, had a natural tendency to make them great and powerful; such a legislator, for instance, as the Spartan Lycurgus: this legislator might safely prophesy, without any apprehension of being confuted by the event, that, if they departed from his statutes and degenerated from the hardihood of military virtue and austere patriotism to a state of luxury and cowardice and selfish effeminacy; they would soon lose their national preëminence, and would be subjected by some more vigorous neighbour. Thus, by a mere deduction of sure effects from general specified causes, and barely by arguing from the general analogy of history, any wise statesman might oracularly foretell the future destiny of his nation. But, to a prophecy of this description, the prophecy of Moses bears not the slightest resemblance. He does not say, that, if the Israelites sank into indolence and luxury, they would be subjected by some more patriotic and more warlike people; an

asseveration, where any one may clearly see the connection between the cause and effect: but he says, that, if they violated the covenant of the Lord their God, which at once forbade them to worship idols, and which enjoined them to receive a future prophet similar to the legislator himself under the express penalty of having their infidelity required of them; he says, that, if they violated this covenant, they should be plucked away from their own land, should be dispersed throughout all nations, and should become a general proverb and by-word to those among whom they were destined to be scattered.¹ Now, if we attend to the bare connection of cause and effect, it is abundantly clear, that Moses, in the delivery of this prophecy, does not argue, as any mere experienced statesman would have argued. The universal voice of history proves, that, while there is a sure connection between patriotic hardihood and political greatness on the one hand, and between selfish profligacy and political weakness on the other hand: there is no such connection, in the way of cause and effect, between the worship of Jehovah and high national prosperity, and between the worship of idols and profound national degradation; or again between the reception of God's announced prophet and success, and between the rejection of God's announced prophet and defeat. The practice of idolatry never retarded the aggrandizement of ancient Rome, nor did her final adoption of Chris-

¹ Deut. xxix, 25—28, xviii. 15—19.

tianity arrest for a moment the sword of the Goth. Yet Moses, in his prediction relative to his own people, just as confidently declares, that certain most extraordinary visitations would be the inevitable result of their breach of God's covenant, as if he had been familiarly accustomed to behold them flow from a dereliction of the revealed will of Jehovah.

But even this is not all. Mere national degradation, or the subjecting of one people to another people, is a fact, which must be familiar to the mind of any legislator. Hence, on the supposition that Moses was nothing more than a sagacious statesman, had he ventured prophetically to annex any penalty to the breach of that covenant which he inculcated as divine ; we may be morally sure, that he would have simply threatened the depression of his people beneath the yoke of some powerful neighbour, associated probably with those horrors which war and conquest never fail to bring in their train : he never would have gratuitously staked his credit on the accomplishment of particulars, as far removed from probability as can well be imagined. Neither from the connection of cause and effect, nor from the analogy of history, nor even from the occurrence of a single precedent, could he have argued, that the breach of a peculiar theological covenant would infallibly draw after it a violent removal of the Israelites from their own land, a scattering of them among all nations, an universally proverbial contempt for their persons : or, if by some incomprehensible process of the

human mind he *had* thus argued, while yet he had no premises from which to deduce his reasoning ; he would scarcely have clogged such a prediction with another prophecy which might seem almost incapable of receiving a joint accomplishment, a prophecy that Israel, though dispersed over the face of the whole earth, should mingle not with the rest of mankind, but should ever be characterized by dwelling alone.

(2.) Thus, I think, it has been sufficiently shewn, that the first part of the alternative, namely that Moses foretold the calamities of the Jews on the mere principle of sagaciously deducing effects from their proper causes, will by no means account for the exact completion of what he professes to deliver as a prophecy.

But, if the first part of the alternative can afford no satisfactory solution, we must have recourse to the second part of it ; namely, that Moses derived his accurate knowledge of futurity from the immediate inspiration of God. If however we be thus compelled to receive him as a divinely inspired prophet, we shall be again brought to the same final result as that to which we have been already brought : the code, promulgated by this confessedly inspired prophet, must itself have been promulgated by the special command and authority of the divine inspirer.

3. But Moses not only foretells the extraordinary circumstances of the deportation and dispersion of the Jews : he also attaches to the last pre-

diction yet another prophecy of a scarcely less remarkable complexion than its fellow.

*It shall come to pass, says he to the assembled people, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart and with all thy soul : that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven ; from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee : and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it ; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.**

Improbable as it must have appeared to any mere statesman, that a whole nation should be removed from their own country, that they should be scattered over the face of the earth, and that they should yet remain a distinct people : it might well seem still more improbable, that, if such *should* be their lot, they should ever be brought back from their dispersion and be planted afresh in the land possessed by their ancestors. From

* Deut. xxx. 1—5.

the change of property and from various other circumstances, we all know how extremely difficult it is for a nation to retrace their steps at the close of any general revolution. Matters are perhaps never quite brought back to their ancient state. Alterations have occurred, which cannot be done away : and many of the sufferers, even when their friends have been restored to power, find themselves utterly unable to regain their alienated estates. If such then be difficulties attendant upon the resettling of a nation, even after an ordinary political revolution ; how impossible must it be, humanly speaking, ever to collect into one body a broken and scattered people, to bring them back into the land from which they had been violently ejected, and to put them into possession of those territorial domains which had long been occupied as their own by other tenants. The scattered people themselves must necessarily, from the very circumstance of their entire dissipation, be devoid of all political energy to effect their own return and reinstatement : they must plainly therefore depend altogether upon the concurrence and assistance of others to effect their complete restitution. But, even if *one* of the nations, among which they were dispersed, should be inclined to promote so extraordinary a counter-revolution ; what political probability is there, that *many* nations, mutually jealous of each other and strongly swayed by numerous clashing interests, should all concur, heart and hand, in the unexampled project

of collecting this despised and scattered race and of reinstating them in the already occupied possessions of their forefathers? Surely no mere statesman, who had any regard to his own credit with posterity, would have hazarded a prediction so very unlikely to be ever accomplished.

Yet this prediction stands recorded as a prophecy of Moses : and, what is still more strange, it has already received an inchoate completion.

The people were led away captive to Babylon, on account of their repeated breach of the covenant : in the land of their captivity, they called to mind God's judgments, and returned unto the Lord : at the close of seventy years, their captivity was turned, and they were brought back into the land which their fathers had possessed. Such accuracy of indisputable accomplishment is an earnest and pledge of a yet future restoration of Judah. Scattered as the people may be, the completion of the prophecy has not been rendered impossible by their absorption into the mass of other nations. They are still a distinct race : and they evidently seem to be preserved thus distinct, for some future high purpose of the Almighty. If we ask, why they remain so long in a broken and dispersed condition, the words of Moses both singularly announce and at the same time account for the fact, though upon principles which baffle the calculation of any mere statesman. *The Lord, says he, will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues and of*

LONG CONTINUANCE.¹ But why are these great plagues to be also of long continuance? Moses declares, that, whensoever the Jews shall return to the Lord their God, he will gather them from all the nations whither he had scattered them. But as yet they have *not* returned to the Lord their God in the way of his covenant; for they still persevere in rejecting that Messenger of Jehovah, who is specially the Angel of the covenant, and who was the family God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all their pious ancestors.² Hence, agreeably to the strict tenor of the prediction, they, *still* remain a dispersed people among all the nations whither the Lord their God hath driven them: and hence the very circumstance of their not being as yet restored, when compared with their present religious state, is itself in reality a completion of the prophecy. We collect indeed from other oracles of God, that *some* of them will, for mere political purposes, be brought back in an unconverted state: but this will not be the case with the *whole*.³ A large proportion of them will *first* return unto the Lord: so that, if in the lapse of ages we had beheld them thus returning to their true national God, and if notwithstanding they had never been gathered back into the land which their fathers possessed; we might then have convicted

¹ Deut. xxviii. 59.

² Malach. iii. 1. Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. xxxii. 24—31. Hos. xii. 2—5.

³ See my Treatise on the restoration of Israel and Judah.

Moses of being a false prophet, because he expressly declares that they *shall* thus be gathered into the land of their ancestors *whenever* they call to mind God's judgments among the nations whither he has driven them. It is manifest therefore, that the non-restoration of the Jews, in their present religious condition, is just as much a standing proof of the divine inspiration of Moses; as their future restoration will be, precisely when their religious condition is changed. The prophecy, in this last particular, has not hitherto been accomplished; simply because, during the uncovenanted infidelity of the Jews, it could not have been accomplished without self-falsification.

4. Closely allied to these two grand predictions, so far as the avowed principle of them is concerned, is another prophecy of Moses, the repeatedly accurate accomplishment of which no mere human sagacity could have foreseen.

The Hebrew legislator strictly forbids idolatry, as any other legislator might have done who was convinced of the divine unity: but then he forbids it under the following most remarkable sanctions. If the Israelites carefully refrained from it, they should invariably be victorious over their enemies: but, if they fell into it, their enemies should no less invariably bring them into subjection.*

Such are the sanctions, under which idolatry is prohibited by Moses; sanctions, which are of course equivalent to a standing prophecy. But

* Levit. xxvi.

the due accomplishment of this standing prophecy is plainly beyond the political calculation even of the most sagacious statesman: for, in the mere way of cause and effect, what necessary and infallible connection is there between monotheism and victory or between idolatry and defeat? It is evident that such a prediction could not be invariably accomplished through many ages, except by the intervention of a miraculous and extraordinary providence; a providence, which in the present day no where exerts itself upon the face of the whole earth. But a providence of this wonderful description plainly could not be commanded by any mere legislative impostor. Hence it is equally plain, that no legislative impostor would have been so superfluously foolish as to rest his credit upon a standing prophecy, which even in his own life-time might have convicted him of falsehood, and which (he would be morally certain) must ere long palpably fail in its accomplishment.

Nor can it be said, that Moses secures to himself a retreat by any Delphic ambiguity. We have here no paltering with a double sense; neither is the oracle rendered less intelligible, or more easy of a wide application, by the lofty figured style of oriental poetry. It is delivered in naked prose: and it is so determinate, that it can neither be misunderstood nor explained away. *Keep yourselves from idolatry, and you shall always vanquish your enemies: apostatise into idolatry, and your enemies shall always vanquish you.* Circumstanced as the Israelites were upon their

entrance into Canaan, any prudent legislator might easily foresee, without the gift of prophecy, that they would have many wars with their neighbours, and that victory would sometimes incline to the one side and sometimes to the other side. *This* state of warfare and *this* alternation of success might have been confidently predicted by a Davus, no less than by an Oedipus: but how could a mere statesman foretell, or rather how could a mere statesman ensure the accomplishment of a prophecy which foretold, that military success should ALWAYS be suspended upon monotheism, and that military discomfiture should ALWAYS be suspended upon idolatry?

We must not overlook the important word ALWAYS. It might easily happen, that in one or two instances the monotheistic Israelites might prove victorious, and that the idolatrous Israelites might be defeated: but how could an impostor guard against the very reverse sometimes taking place; how could he ALWAYS, through the lapse of many centuries, ensure victory to monotheism and defeat to idolatry? Yet we need only read the history of Israel, from their settlement in Palestine down to the Babylonian captivity when God for wise reasons ceased to exert this extraordinary providence: and we cannot fail to observe, with what minute accuracy the prediction of Moses was regularly accomplished. This regular accomplishment moreover must have been felt and acknowledged by the Israelites themselves: for, had they repeatedly found by woeful experience that

their lawgiver was a false prophet, had they found that they throve under idolatry quite as well as under monotheism ; we may be certain, when we recollect their strange propensity to adopt the rites of the Gentiles, that the worship of Jehovah would soon have been abandoned, and that Moses (if remembered at all) would have been remembered like Osiris or Taut or Phoroneus or Prometheus.

5. The same mode of reasoning applies with equal force to all the other positive institutes of the Mosaical dispensation : for, in fact, that entire dispensation, resting as it avowedly does upon the incessant exertion of an extraordinary providence, may well be deemed one standing prophecy of perpetual accomplishment.

How could an impostor ensure the regularly twofold produce of the harvest, which succeeded each sabbatical year : and how would a mere statesman have dared to foretell so perpetually recurring a miracle, or how could he have foreseen its due recurrence in the way of cause and effect ? How could an impostor be certain, that all the males in the land might thrice every year go up in safety to Jerusalem, without any molestation on the part of their enemies : and how can it be imagined, that a wise statesman would ever make so strangely incautious a statute, which, without the ceaseless intervention of a special providence, must so often needlessly expose the country to all the horrors of an unresisted invasion ? How could an

impostor ensured a quiescent army from an attack on the sabbath day: and how can we suppose, that a mere statesman would enjoin so strict an observance of the day as we know to have prevailed among the Jews down even to the sacking of their capital by Titus, that the people should deem it impious to bear arms on that hebdomadal festival even against an assailing enemy.

The whole Levitical dispensation, in short, is built upon the evident assumption of a *perpetual extraordinary providence*. Was this providence then in constant operation, or was it *not* in constant operation? If the latter, not a decade of years could have rolled over the heads of the Israelites without their detecting, by the repeated failure of a standing prophecy, that their institutes were a gross imposition upon their credulity: if the former, the Pentateuch must have been from God, because no human being can command a perpetual extraordinary providence. Now, at no one period of their history, from the time of Moses down to the present day, do the Israelites ever appear to have doubted, for a single moment, the divine authority of the Law. They transgressed it indeed repeatedly, and in the first instance they were much inclined to question the supernatural legation of Moses: but, when once they were settled in Palestine, however frequently they might corrupt themselves, they rather *added* the worship of idols to the worship of Jehovah than adopted the one to the *exclusion* of the other;

the Law they might indeed violate, but they never (so far as we can collect from their history) thought of disputing its divine authority. But *this* they inevitably *must* have done, as reasonable beings, if they had repeatedly found by experience, that its promises were wholly fallacious, and that its threats were an innocuous thunderbolt. Their minds however, so far as matter of fact is concerned, were troubled with no unbelieving doubts; which yet they must have been, had the standing prophecy of the Law been daily convicted of falsehood. Hence it is plain, that the standing prophecy of the Law was perceived and acknowledged to be duly and regularly accomplished. But that standing prophecy could not have been duly and regularly accomplished, except by the intervention of an extraordinary providence. We are therefore compelled to call in an extraordinary providence to solve the difficulty. If however we be thus compelled to call in an extraordinary providence, we acknowledge the divine legation of Moses and therefore the divine authority of the Pentateuch.

III. But the argument from prophecy does not terminate with the strictly proper writings of Moses himself: the accomplishment of every subsequent prediction is in fact an evidence of *their* divine inspiration.

The Jews have a very pertinent proverb respecting such an extension of the present argument; *One prophet, that hath the testimony of another prophet, is supposed to be true.* The train of rea-

soning, condensed in this apophthegm, is sufficiently obvious.

No true prophet can bear testimony in favour of an impostor : because to suppose such a circumstance were in effect to suppose, that God himself may sanction falsehood. Now the event has proved, beyond a possibility of reasonable contradiction, that many of the Israelites, subsequent to Moses, were true prophets : they foretold what no uninspired mortal could possibly have foreseen ; what they foretold was punctually accomplished ; the power therefore of thus foretelling must have been communicated to them by divine inspiration. But these true prophets all exercised their function under the Law of Moses, fully acknowledging its authority to be of God, and recognizing the great legislator of their people as a heaven-taught messenger. Consequently, every accomplished prediction of these true prophets is an attestation, as the Jewish proverb rightly maintains, to the divine legation of Moses and to the divine authority of his writings.

Here it may be observed, that, on the principle of our Hebrew apophthegm, Christianity itself bears witness to the sincerity of the Law. Our Saviour formally recognized Moses as a teacher sent from God ; and declared, that, so far from seeking to destroy the Law, he himself came to fulfil it. But the full accomplishment of his own remarkable prediction concerning Jerusalem and the present dispersion of the Jews, to say nothing

of the equally accurate accomplishment of his other predictions, demonstrates him to be a true prophet. Such being the case, his recognition of Moses must inevitably demonstrate the inspiration of Moses also : for *one prophet, that hath the testimony of another prophet, is supposed to be true.*

Thus complete and irrefragable is the argument from prophecy.

CHAP. VII.

THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE PENTATEUCH PROVED FROM ITS INCULCATING THE UNITY OF THE GODHEAD.

THERE is yet another argument, which seems to me very strongly to prove the divine inspiration of the Pentateuch, though its tendency may not at the first appear quite so obvious: I mean the argument which may be drawn from the circumstance, that the unity of the Godhead is strenuously inculcated, as a necessary article of faith, both in the writings of Moses and in all those other subsequent writings which profess to build upon them; so that this tenet became the most prominent doctrine of the Hebrew republic.

I. From the wide diffusion of Christianity and (it is but fair to add) of Mohammedism, our minds are now so familiarized to the grand tenet of the divine unity, that we find it even difficult to imagine how any other opinion could ever have prevailed.

The doctrine, in short, approves itself so entirely to our reason ; it so well harmonizes with the palpable unity of design, which pervades the whole creation ; and it appears to present itself so naturally to any thinking mind : that the very circumstance of its obviousness might well prevent its being adduced as any proof, that the code, which inculcates it, was delivered by divine inspiration.

But, in thus viewing the subject, we forget the times in which we are placed. Would we view it justly and accurately, we must transport ourselves in imagination to that long and dreary period, which preceded the rising of the Sun of righteousness upon a benighted world.

II. Now, when we have thus transported ourselves, what do we find to be the naked matter of fact with respect to this apparently so obvious proposition, that it need only be adduced in order to be immediately received ? The naked matter of fact is this : the whole world was plunged in idolatrous polytheism, without any difference being effected by different degrees of civilization ; the cultivated and the barbarous were alike determined worshippers of a multiplicity of gods ; and the doctrine of the divine unity, as the received national creed, was confined to a single small people.

Such is the undoubted fact : and the question is, how we are to account for it.

1. Shall we say, that the Israelites, by the higher cultivation of their intellects and by their habits of more closely reasoning backward from effect to cause, were brought to the universal admission of a

truth, which others attained not to, merely on account of their mental inferiority and their less advanced progress in abstract discussion?

If such be our proposed solution, it stands directly contradicted by history. Never perhaps was there a people less addicted to refined speculation than the ancient Israelites. Both their natural humour and their national habits alike precluded them from entering deeply into abstract reasoning. They were coarsely given to regard only sensible objects: they were a race of complete agriculturists, tied to the soil by the very machinery of their statutes, and prevented by the same constantly operative cause from enlarging their minds by an extensive commercial intercourse with the rest of mankind. Nor is this all: so far from having themselves excogitated the doctrine, they shewed a strange and perpetual inclination to abandon it, plain and obvious as it may appear to minds constituted like our own. They so incessantly lapsed into the polytheism of the Gentiles, that they were never cured of this depraved tendency to palpable error until the time of the Babylonian captivity; nor, even after that period, were they entirely free from a strong Hellenizing propensity. Yet, notwithstanding these departures, the doctrine of the divine unity may assuredly be deemed the most prominent feature of the national creed, from their first settlement as a people down to their dispersion over the face of the whole earth.

It is abundantly clear then, that the doctrine was not philosophically excogitated by the Israel-

ites themselves : and accordingly we find it, not artificially and abstractedly demonstrated in their sacred books, but only dogmatically and authoritatively enforced in them. The perfect rationality of the tenet indeed is undoubted : but how happened it, that the Hebrew legislator alone publicly maintained and inculcated it ? Whence did he himself receive such an opinion ? Egypt, the very land of bestial and vegetable gods, were but an indifferent school for the education of a professed iconoclastic monotheist. Or, even if the divine unity were the esoteric doctrine of a mysterious priesthood, how came Moses to depart so far from the principles of his instructors as to communicate unreservedly so sublime a dogma to the profane multitude ?

2. But from the monotheistic Israelites let us turn to the polytheistic Gentiles.

Here I would make little account of barbarian tribes ; for it might naturally be said, that with *them* polytheistic idolatry was but the offspring of a degraded and uncultivated intellect, which beheld a present deity auspicious or malignant in whatsoever benefited and in whatsoever molested them ; but how shall we account for that worship of multifarious gods which equally prevailed throughout the most civilized empires of antiquity, if we contend, that in the first instance there was no need of inspiration authoritatively to enjoin monotheism and authoritatively to prohibit polytheism ? Why was the divine unity the established doctrine of the rustic and little-inquisitive Israelites ; while the philosophic Babylonians, the sagacious Egyptians,

the deeply speculative Greeks, and the powerfully intellectual Romans, were universally devoted to the adoration of a myriad of deities? How happened it, that the truth should alone be found with the comparatively ignorant; while, however easy of discovery it may now seem to *us*, it should have escaped the observation of the wise and the cultivated?

It will probably be said, that it did *not* escape their observation; for that the wise and the cultivated *did* admit the doctrine of the divine unity.

Now, if we grant for a moment the justice of this remark, the person, who makes it, will only rid himself of one half of the difficulty: for the grand fact will still remain to be accounted for; *the sole establishment of monotheism among the unlettered Israelites as the decided national creed, while of every other people lettered or unlettered the established national creed was gross polytheism.* But I greatly doubt, whether the justice of this remark can be granted. We have often been told, that the philosophic few, though for political reasons they upheld the religion of the state, clearly saw the absurdity of polytheism, and recognized only one Supreme Being. This has been so frequently and so positively asserted, that it has been commonly admitted as a thing indisputable: yet, after all, the better half of it may well be questioned. It is true indeed, that the philosophers saw the absurdity of polytheism: but it is not equally true, that they therefore worshipped that one sole God, who was declared by Moses, and who was adored

by the Israelites. They seem indeed, by dint of reasoning, to have been brought to the philosophical necessity of a single first cause : but, as to the distinct aspect, under which they were to view this first cause, they were wrapped in the dense shades of the most impenetrable darkness. The greatest part of them were *effectively* rather atheists, than theists : for the only god, whom they acknowledged, was the plastic energy of universal nature, acting by a fatal destiny, pervading all space, and ultimately identified with the whole frame of the material world. To this being they partially ascribed the imaginary attributes of *the great father* of the popular superstition. Their divine unity was one and all things. Whatsoever was seen, and whatsoever was touched, was a member of the great pantheistic god. Every intelligent soul was excerpted from his essence, and into his essence was at length reabsorbed. Some might pass through various transmigrations in their progress towards final beatitude, but absorption was the ultimate destiny of all. As a portion of water retains its individuality, only while confined within a proper vessel ; but is instantaneously blended with its multitudinous parent ocean, when the vessel is broken over the waves : so the soul was deemed to retain its individuality, only while confined within the prison of some corporeal vehicle ; but, when finally liberated from the bonds of the flesh, it plunged at once into the abyss of the universal numen, and forthwith lost all consciousness of separate existence. Such being the case, every

thing, whether spiritual or material, was a portion of the mighty pantheus. The world therefore, and all that it contains, were necessarily uncreated ; for all were equally parts of the one deity. Hence, though the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments might be *exoterically* held out for the better restriction of the vulgar ; the thing itself, on philosophical principles, was *esoterically* declared to be plainly impossible : because, as every soul was excerpted from the divine essence and as every soul was finally reabsorbed into it ; all individual existence, and therefore all capability of proper reward or punishment, ultimately ceased alike.

These in the main were the speculations of those philosophers, who held what has very improperly been called *the divine unity* : improperly, I say, because the term would obviously lead an incautious hearer to imagine, that they worshipped the same divine unity as the ancient Israelites. But this was very far from being the real fact. The Israelites adored an all-wise, all-good, and all-powerful, Spirit ; who exists from everlasting to everlasting, who called the universe out of its original nothing, and who created by an act of sovereign will every individual intelligent soul. They venerated a Being, who himself possesses strict individuality ; and who is and ever will be totally distinct from every spirit which he has created. They revered a God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity ; who utterly abhors those abominations, of which the gentile monotheists (if *mono-*

theists they can be called) thought so lightly ; who is guided, not by destiny, but by the unerring law which springs from his own perfections ; who does not with Epicurean indolence disregard the affairs of mortals, or attend only to those things which by *men* are counted great ; but who, with omnipresent wisdom, beholds, and directs, and moderates, all things.

3. Such is the one God, as declared by Moses, and as worshipped by the Israelites. The existence of this awful Being instantaneously approves itself to our reason, and is *now* from our very childhood familiar to our imagination. Yet never was it discovered by the unassisted wisdom of the most enlightened Gentiles. *Who, by searching, can find out God?* The world, by wisdom, knew him not. An acquaintance with him, as he really is, can be derived only from revelation.

CHAP. VIII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

WE have now seen the grounds, on which the Pentateuch may rest its claim to be esteemed a portion of authentic history. But, if it be a portion of authentic history; it must needs, *as such*, be additionally a revelation from God himself. Hence it cannot be despised or overlooked with impunity.

Many, of late years, have been the attempts to invalidate the credibility of this venerable portion of Scripture: but the Christian has no reason to fear, that God will ever suffer the faith, which was once delivered to the saints, to be totally overthrown. It cannot, however, be too often enforced, that the Bible is an authoritative standard, by which our lives and actions are to be regulated. That holy book was never designed to be merely a curious groundwork of discussion: nor was it revealed for the insignificant purpose of gratifying a

vain curiosity. When our belief in the truth of Revelation has been rationally and satisfactorily established ; it is our duty, not to rest satisfied with a bare historical persuasion of its authenticity, but to shew the reality of our faith by the purity of our lives and conversation. Our own unassisted efforts indeed *can* neither create the principle, nor bring to maturity the fruits of holiness. Of ourselves, we are not able even to think a good thought, much less to perform a good action. We may perhaps attain to a bare belief in the truth of Scripture, as we do to that of any fact recorded in profane history, solely by exercising our reason : but a true Christian faith proceeds from God alone, from Him who is the author of every good and of every perfect gift.¹

Nor is this doctrine less agreeable to plain matter of fact, than to the inspired word of God. However some may arrogantly boast of their natural tendency to virtue and their aversion from vice ; he, that has the least knowledge of his own heart, will confess, that he finds within it a bitter root of sin, which struggles against every good resolution and which resists every divine precept. This internal malady affords a constant subject of grief even to the very best of men : but, in the unreclaimed and impenitent, it rages with a tenfold fury ; and urges them not unfrequently to a presumptuous rejection of Scripture itself. Hence we find, that infidelity is usually the offspring, not so

¹ Ephes. ii. 8.

much of an enlightened understanding, as of a depraved heart. The precepts of revealed religion, not its mysteries, are the true causes of unbelief. If Scripture be the word of God, the profligate are condemned to everlasting torments; if it be an imposture, the danger is removed, and the pleasures of sin may be pursued without interruption. What the heart wishes to be false, the head strives to disbelieve: and the inspired volume is rejected, not because the evidences of its credibility have been found insufficient; but because it denounces eternal perdition to the whoremonger and the adulterer, the drunkard and the sensualist.

As the affections are the principal seat of infidelity; so Christian faith, as contradistinguished from bare speculative belief, is situated in the heart, rather than in the head. It consists, not merely in an acknowledgment of the authenticity of Scripture; but in an unreserved obedience to its precepts, in a cordial submission to its authority, and in an un-mixed reliance upon the merits of Jesus Christ. To rest satisfied with any inferior degree of conviction, is to labour under a most dreadful delusion, and madly to build the hope of salvation, not upon the faith of a Christian, but upon the belief of a demon. Some indeed may vainly please themselves with I know not what undefined notion of the mercy of God: but the page of Scripture holds a very different language; and repeatedly declares, that to the impenitent and wilfully deluded no mercy whatsoever will be extended, but that a cup of inexorable wrath and unallayed indignation will be their eternal portion.

On these grounds, we are warned in the sacred volume against an evil *heart* of unbelief; and it requires no great labour to prove, that a conviction of the understanding is of little avail, unless the affections be at the same time thoroughly reformed. To God alone we must undoubtedly leave the conversion of the heart; for, without the prevenient grace of his Holy Spirit, vain will be all the endeavours of man: but, as a deep conviction of the truth of Scripture is a necessary prerequisite to this conversion; the subject, which has been discussed, is by no means devoid of importance to the interests of Christianity. Every attempt to rescue the historical part of the Pentateuch from the imputations, which have been cast upon it by infidelity, tends ultimately to establish the authority of the Gospel; and, as such, will be favourably received by the friend of Revelation. He will consider the common motive, by which all Christians are influenced; he will bless the God of mercy for the various benefits, which result from our holy religion; and his faith will receive additional strength, as he contemplates the church of Christ securely founded upon a rock and bidding defiance to each assault of her enemies.

